

NIGELLA LAWSON
When a degree isn't worth having
PAGE 17

GOING, GOING, GONE
UNDERGROUND

DR THOMAS STUTTAFFORD
On exercising the pounds away
PAGE 16

BEST FOR BOOKS
Antonia Fraser on intrigue at the court of James I
PLUS: Marianne Wiggins on Jeanette Winterson
PAGES 34,35



Nurse's killers 'should be beheaded'

By ROGER MAYNARD,
SHIRLEY ENGLISH
AND STEPHEN FARRELL

THE brother of an Australian nurse murdered in Saudi Arabia called yesterday for two British nurses charged with the crime to be publicly beheaded if found guilty.

Yvonne Gilford's brother, Frank, said: "Whoever did this did not give clemency to my sister and I don't think I would offer clemency, bearing in mind the way my sister was murdered."

His uncompromising call came as one of the Britons, Lucille McLaughlin, 31, protested her innocence through her family after

speaking to them by telephone from prison in Dhahran.

Miss McLaughlin, from Dundee, is being held with Deborah Parry, 41, after their arrest on Friday last week. Both worked at the King Fahd Military Medical Complex in Dhahran, where Miss Gilford, 55, a senior theatre nurse, was found dead in her room on December 11. She is reported to have been stabbed four times, hit with a hammer and smothered.

Miss McLaughlin's family said

she had told them they were being well treated and had been able to collect their belongings. She claimed, however, that Miss Parry had signed a confession after being told she could not speak to her family unless she did so.

Miss McLaughlin's father, Stanley, said yesterday that the family was in shock after learning of her death in a telephone call from the Foreign Office on Saturday. He has spoken with his daughter twice, in a conversation arranged through

the Saudi authorities on Sunday and during a jail visit by Lawson Ross, the British consul, on Christmas Eve.

Standing beside his wife, Ann, he said: "We were totally stunned and obviously the family is still very shocked. Anyone who knows Lucy will know that she is incapable of the charges that have been made against her. Our first priority now is to ensure that she has the best possible legal representation in Saudi."

Although the two Britons would be expected to engage the services of a lawyer, under Islamic law such a representative would not have the right to take a formal part in any trial.

Miss Laughlan's brother, John, said: "She said the case had nothing to do with her and all she wanted to do was tell us she was OK and not to worry."

Miss Gilford, described as "one of the last of the Florence Nightingales", moved to Saudi Arabia after

25 years in South Africa because she believed it was safer. Her family is still waiting for her body to be returned for burial. The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs is also awaiting the reports from the post-mortem examination about the nature of Miss Gilford's injuries.

Under Saudi Arabia's Islamic law, murderers face execution, although no European has been given the death penalty. Clemency is in the hands of the victim's

family, who can appeal to the sentencing court for mercy.

Mr Gilford, speaking at home in Jamestown, South Australia, made it clear, however, that he would make no such appeal. He claimed there was strong evidence against the two Britons: "I believe there is a security video of the girls using Yvonne's credit cards and to me that's pretty conclusive evidence, as they must have got the cards before her room was sealed off."

"If you do something wrong in a foreign country you have to abide by the rules and punishments of that nation," he said.

Dark secrets, page 3

Calls for moral renewal after year of tragedy

By RUTH GLEDEHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT, AND JILL SHERMAN

THE Archbishop of York, Dr David Hope, gave a warning yesterday of the dangers of turning to "feel-good" spiritualities such as astrology and Tarot cards after a year haunted by Dunblane and the murder of Philip Lawrence.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, also referred to the tragedies, saying that society had come adrift from its moral and historical roots. He urged people to face up to their spiritual as well as material needs.

And the Queen, in her Christmas message, emphasised the need to look forward with faith. In an implicit reference to the Dunblane shooting, in which 16 children and their teacher died, she said: "At times of tragedy it is tempting to look back and say 'if only'. But to look back in that way is to look down a blind alley. Better look forward and say 'if only'."

"If only we can live up to the example of the child who was born at Christmas with a love that came to embrace the whole world. If only we can let Him reappear for us that time when we faced the future with childhood's unbounded faith."

Preaching at York Minster, Dr Hope said that in this age of spiritual hunger there was a dearth of concrete values for people to hold on to. It could be seen in "the market place of contemporary spiritualities — the astrologers, the Tarot card readers, the psalmists, the new agers and so on — and with that, the search for self and the quest for God."

"Spirituality can simply become a search for the alternative feel-good factor or an escape into a purely personal

pathway wholly directed towards one's own self-fulfilment and based largely on feeling and emotion. Darkness and evil are never very far from us, nor is the darker side of our human nature."

However, there were signs of hope. "Even in some of the tragedies of this past 12 months or so, hope for the future has emerged. The quiet dignity of Mrs Lawrence or the compelling fortitude of the Dunblane parents have perhaps been the most telling and persuasive evidences of human virtue and worth. They are not alone."

In his Canterbury Cathedral sermon, Dr Carey said: "In our society, that feels at times so adrift from its moral, historical and institutional roots, I detect an increasing desire in people to find a spiritual home. We have seen it expressed this year in the response to the killing at Dunblane and to the murder of Philip Lawrence."

"It has been there, too, in the debates on morality and the call for our millennium celebrations to be something

much more than a trade fair or a street party."

He urged his congregation to embark on a "spiritual journey towards God" to find fulfilment. He also called for the church and society to do more to meet the needs of the poor and homeless.

"As we go to our homes today, we should not forget the needs of the homeless we see around us, whether in Canterbury or London or other major cities. Surely one of the most distressing and damning sights of the late 20th century is the number of people sleeping rough in doorways or under cardboard boxes."

Cardinal Basil Hume, Archbishop of Westminster, emphasised the importance of living a life of faith, urging worshippers not to squeeze God out of their daily lives.

In his homily at Westminster Cathedral, he said: "Remember, too, that crowd of martyrs men and women, many in our own day, who died because they believed. Be proud to be of their number, explorers of the truth like doctors of the church, witnesses to our faith like the martyrs."

"Tough in mind and spirit, we shall have no part in squeezing him out of our culture and our daily lives. Let our voices be heard. God became man and dwelt among us. That is our faith."

The Bishop of Lincoln, the Right Rev Robert Hardy, who boycotted his cathedral in protest at ongoing difficulties there, preached at two country churches without their own vicars. He spoke out against consumerism.

Hope: "There is dearth of concrete values"

Palace message, page 13
Queen's broadcast, page 20



Prince William receiving roses from an admirer after the Christmas service at Sandringham yesterday

Red roses for shy Prince

By CAROL MIDGLEY

AN ADMIRER OF Prince William presented him with a Christmas gift of red roses at Sandringham yesterday.

The Prince, aged 14, looked embarrassed but smiled when the blonde girl thrust forward the bouquet as he greeted well-wishers after the Royal Family's traditional church service.

The flowers were among several gifts which the Prince accepted during his walk back to Sandringham House from St Mary Magdalene Church with the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Prince of

Wales and other members of the Royal Family.

Yesterday about 1,000 people turned out to greet the 17-member royal party on the outing compared to about 4,000 last year. The Queen, surrounded by her six grandchildren, looked relaxed and happy as she accepted presents from the crowd.

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Princesses Beatrice and Eugenie delighted the crowd in matching blue velvet muffs and berets. Their mother, the Duchess of York, remained behind at Wood Farm, Welford, near Sandringham House, where she is spending Christmas.

Princess on cover, page 3

Fire arrests

A woman died and her two children were injured in a fire at their house. Two people have been arrested. — Page 4

Brief white Christmas is cold comfort for punters

By ROBIN YOUNG

BOOKMAKERS face a payout of at least six figures today after a light dusting of snow gave some parts of the country their first white Christmas for more than 20 years.

Sprinklings of snow in London, Norwich, Manchester and Newcastle appeared sufficient for punters to claim winnings.

Graham Sharpe, a spokesman for William Hill, said bets on snow falling during the 24 hours to midnight last night had been placed for Glasgow, Birmingham, Glasgow and Cardiff might also oblige.

The biggest winner in the capital was James Sexton, 2

well as the four centres where snow fell early yesterday.

The weather centres in the main cities will contact us on Boxing Day to let us know officially what has happened in each of them," he said.

The wait proved particularly tense for two punters in Cannock, Staffordshire, who wagered £3,500 on snow falling in four cities. Their choice of Newcastle, at odds of two to one, ensured a £7,000 win, but they were waiting yesterday to learn whether Birmingham, Glasgow and Cardiff might also oblige.

The biggest winner in the

Bank chief expects early rates rise

INTEREST rates will have to increase early next year to counter inflation, according to Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England.

He also spoke of his worries about the single European currency, saying that conflict among member states over interest rates could cause tensions which would weaken the euro.

In an interview with *Le Figaro*, Mr George said that the British economy was showing solid growth, with unemployment falling and inflation at its lowest for a generation. "But we are also witnessing a recovery of expansion owing to consumption as is shown by strong support for the money supply."

Last month, the Bank's quarterly inflation report gave warning that further rises would be necessary, but Mr Clarke's tight Budget staved off rises before Christmas. The City and the Confederation of British Industry both agree rates must rise before the election.

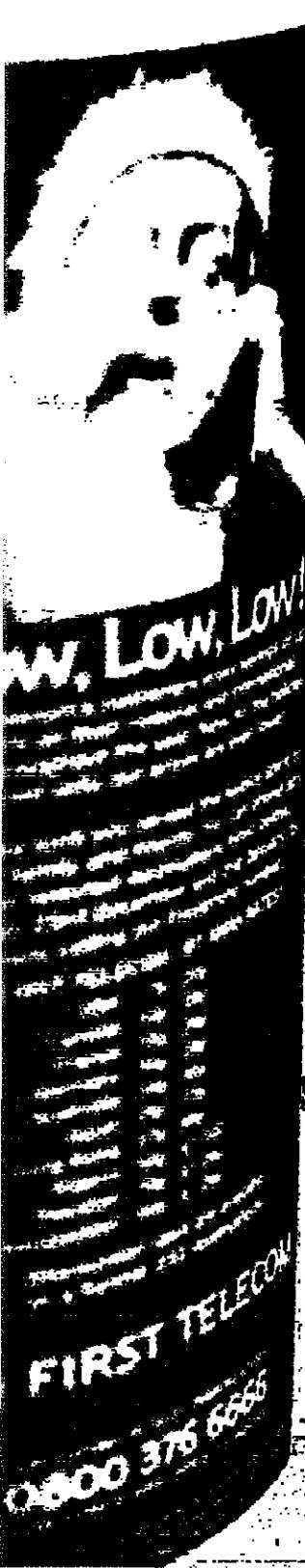
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OBITUARIES
WILLIAM REES MOGG 18

Forecast, page 22

ARTS	32, 33
CHESS & BRIDGE	31
COURT & SOCIAL	20
BOOKS	34, 35



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Complaints body calls for changes in the law to end public suspicion

Register police Masons, says watchdog

By RICHARD FORD
HOME CORRESPONDENT

POLICE officers should be compelled to reveal if they are Freemasons to remove public suspicions about Masonic influence within the service, a complaints watchdog recommends today.

The proposal to require officers to register their membership of the Masons and similar organisations by law is likely to meet strong opposition from organisations representing rank-and-file officers. But the Police Complaints Authority says that a public register is needed to stop the public thinking that officers

who are Masons might put their loyalty to the brotherhood before their duties.

Until a statutory system is set up, officers should declare their membership of the Freemasons and similar organisation in an entry on their personal files, says the Authority's submission to the Home Affairs select committee inquiry into Freemasonry in the police and judiciary.

Although some would clearly refuse such an initiative, it would at least start to dismantle the present culture of secrecy.

The Authority is backing the Association of Chief Police Officers, which has urged the

Home Secretary to introduce legislation for a compulsory register of police interests. It would make officers disclose membership of any organisation whose articles of association demanded a bond of loyalty from their members.

The PCA says that there is a perception among many members of the public that Masons who are police officers might be tempted to put their loyalty to their Brethren before their official duties.

The PCA says public suspicion is shared by some non-Masons in the police who had privately expressed their concerns. The submission says that while very few complaints

allege that misconduct has occurred as a direct result of an officer's membership of the Freemasons, there were rather more cases involving suspicion of Masonic influence.

It highlights a number of cases involving Freemasonry including one where an officer's involvement with the organisation appeared to raise serious concern. In a case involving allegations that residents of privately-run residential care home had been subject to serious abuse, it emerged that the proprietor of the home and a middle-ranking officer had a close relationship and were members of the same Lodge. "Similar suggestions have arisen in a case involving the systematic abuse of children in a local authority home and in another involving allegations of corruption against the force's Criminal Investigation Department.

"Such examples give the impression to the general public that membership of a Masonic Lodge may involve police officers in unhealthy relationships which could influence the way in which they carry out their duties," the submission says.

It adds that though anecdotal evidence suggests that the influence of Freemasonry in most police forces has declined over recent years, there were

some officers who believed that their careers had been adversely affected by their refusal to join the Masons.

In October the Association of Chief Police Officers called on officers and civilian staff to register openly their membership of the Freemasons. However, the Police Superintendents' Association and the Police Federation have serious reservations.

The Commons Home Affairs select committee held its first public session of its inquiry into the influence of Freemasonry in the police and judiciary last week.

Letters, page 19

MARTIN BEDDOE

Inquiry urged on training site sales

By VALERIE ELLIOTT
WHITEHALL EDITOR

THE Comptroller and Auditor General, Sir John Bourn, is being asked to investigate the alleged loss of £21.5 million after the Government's sale of sites formerly used as skilled training centres.

Labour has referred the matter to the National Audit Office after James Paine, an Education and Employment Minister, disclosed that 14 sites had been sold for £14.7 million, despite a value of £36.2 million placed on the 14 properties by the NAO in June 1991.

The sites in question are at Leicester, East Lancashire, Chelmsford, Leeds, Wakefield, Edinburgh, Southampton, Slough, Reading, Twickenham, Portsmouth, St Helens, Cardiff and Deptford, southeast London.

Some of the sites were acquired by Astra Training Services which also received £11 million from the Government. But three years ago Astra collapsed with debts of over £15 million.

Stephen Byers, Labour's training spokesman, said: "The sale of the skills training centres has been a sorry saga. This new disclosure that the sites have been sold for less than half their value is a matter of great concern and requires a full investigation."

He added: "Astra went into receivership because of Government cuts in spending on training. This latest turn of events shows how misguided such a policy was."



Dogs not even for Christmas

THESE two mongrel puppies were among 27 dogs rescued by the Battersea Dogs Home over Christmas, including ten yesterday (Caroline Midgley writes). The three-month-old labrador crosses, one male and one female, were found in a dustbin on Christmas Eve. Steve Lynn, head of kennels, said: "They were pretty cold and very hungry when they were found, but they are doing well now. They had been very deliberately placed inside a box inside a dustbin. If they had stayed there longer they could have been picked up by refuse collectors. My guess is

that they were the last two puppies out of a litter and the owner has not been able to find homes for them and panicked. However, I want to stress we will always take in puppies for people who cannot keep them." The other

rescued dogs included a mongrel puppy found freezing in a London park after being abandoned, and several more picked up while wandering the streets. By law all the dogs will have to be kept for seven days to enable their owners to collect them before new homes can be allocated.

□ A cat was rescued when it became stuck in ice on a frozen pond in Bridgewater, Somerset, yesterday. Fire-fighters freed the cat by breaking up the ice with pickaxe handles. It was said to be distressed and cold, but otherwise unharmed.

Police investigate display of IRA rifle in exhibition on Troubles

By NICHOLAS WATT, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

A MUSEUM in Londonderry is being investigated by police after it displayed an assault rifle used by IRA terrorists, in an exhibition on the Troubles.

Detectives in the city visited the award-winning Tower Museum this week after it admitted that an AK47 Kalashnikov which forms the centrepiece of Ulster's first exhibition on the contemporary Troubles once belonged to the IRA. The RUC confirmed that it had opened an investigation.

The museum insisted that the decision to display the IRA rifle had been cleared with the RUC. Brian Lacey, the director of museum services in Londonderry, said: "It is an original weapon and was in use by republicans. But it has

been decommissioned and has been inspected by the RUC. We are obliged to do that."

Mr Lacey would not say how the museum had secured the weapon, although he said that it had not come directly from the IRA. He added: "We have had co-operation from various organisations. We approached official and other organisations that are part of the conflict."

In the exhibition, the assault rifle is held by a dummy dressed up as an IRA terrorist with a menacing face peering through a balaclava. The gunman is one of four dummies in the exhibition which are designed to show all sides of the Troubles. The IRA terrorist, who is described by the muse-

um simply as an "IRA volunteer", stands next to a loyalist gunman on a par with members of the security forces. Andrew Hunter, chairman of the Tory backbench Northern Ireland committee, said: "This exhibition is perpetuating the propaganda of the IRA. It conceals the fact that the IRA is a minority within a minority that has murdered and maimed almost without apology. It is sick that anyone in authority can treat the security forces on the same level as the IRA and the UDA."

The museum vigorously defended its decision to display the weapons. Mr Lacey said: "The middle classes and cultural institutions have avoided talking about the Troubles. If we don't do that now, how can we face up to it?"



The display in the Tower Museum exhibition

Graves desecrated in Ulster cemetery

Eighteen Catholic graves were found desecrated in a Northern Irish cemetery yesterday. The graves in Redburn cemetery, Holywood, Co Down, including the headstone of James McCaffin, a republican killed by loyalist paramilitaries in 1972, were covered in paint and graffiti. Locals said all the damaged graves were Catholic although police investigating the attack refused to confirm that.

Police said they were investigating the attack to establish whether the vandalism was prompted by sectarianism. The council cleaned most of the graves yesterday.

Paedophile ring arrests

A senior police officer was among seven men arrested by detectives investigating a paedophile ring at the council-run Aberdare Leisure Centre in Glamorgan, it emerged last night. The officer, a married father-of-two in his early 50s based at Merthyr Tydfil, has been freed on police bail and suspended while the Police Complaints Authority investigates. Detectives are interviewing two boys aged 14 and 15. It is alleged that the elder boy worked as a prostitute.

Hunt widens for mother

Police have widened their search for a woman with postnatal depression who went missing on Friday. Laura Templeton, 22, of Kirkmuirhill, South Lanarkshire, who has daughters aged four and eight months, disappeared after apparently having a panic attack. She is 5ft 2in, slim with long dark brown hair, green eyes and a pale complexion. She was wearing a black top, cream skirt, black jacket, black tights and black ankle boots.

Faulty wire killed girl

A girl who was electrocuted as she switched on her family's Christmas tree lights on Saturday died because of a defective wire in the power supply. Cara Weatherstone, 6, died instantly when she switched on a table lamp into which the lights were plugged at her home in Hornsea, east Yorkshire. The finding follows detailed investigations by the police, trading standards officers and officials from Yorkshire Electricity.

Pupils contract meningitis

More than 300 schoolgirls have been offered meningitis vaccinations after two sixth-form students contracted the illness. Pupils from Maidstone Grammar School for Girls, Kent, were recalled to the school on Christmas Eve for an emergency surgery, and helplines were set up for parents. So far 80 per cent of sixth-form girls have been contacted. The two 16-year-old girls found to be suffering from meningitis were recovering in hospital yesterday.

Ministers oppose EU grant

The Government is to resist a proposal that the European Commission spend £4.2 million to help lawyers and judges improve their knowledge of EU law. The Commission plans a three-year programme of grants to institutions that offer to promote training in EU law, so that lawyers have the knowledge to assert citizens' rights. British ministers say this would be unnecessary as the profession already has a duty to maintain its learning.

Coastguard undermanned

The coastguard station at Stornoway on Lewis in the Western Isles, which has responsibility for the busy Minch shipping lanes, was below the basic staffing levels on 50 days in the year up to August, the chief coastguard, John Astbury, has admitted. Mr Astbury has assured the Western Isles MP, Calum MacDonald, that the staffing was being reviewed. Mr MacDonald said it was shocking that a key station was below approved levels.

Teenager drowns in canal

Police yesterday praised the bravery of a man who jumped into a canal in an attempt to save his drowning friend. Richard Harrison, 17, fell into the water at the canal lock near a public house in his home town of Kiveton, Staffordshire, as he walked with friends along a footbridge on Christmas Eve. Mr Harrison was dead on arrival at hospital in Dudley in spite of attempts by the friend and a police officer to resuscitate him.

Ulster shop sets sales record

A Northern Ireland store set the record for a single day's trading by Marks & Spencer. More than 30,000 customers spent almost £1 million at the store in Sprucefield, near Lisburn, Co Antrim, on Monday, half of it in the food hall. The amount was the highest spent on food in any Marks & Spencer store across the world. Andrew Keating, the manager, said customers were queuing at 7 am when the store opened.

Baby wins bet for parents

An 8lb boy born at one minute past midnight is believed to have been the first baby delivered on Christmas Day. Emma Daniels, 19, had been due to give birth three days earlier at the Whittington Hospital in north London, and her family began putting bets on her delivering a Christmas baby as the 25th approached. Ernie Gibson, 22, the child's father, said: "We may call him something Christmassy for a middle name but not his first."

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Racing around the world to celebrate Christmas

YESTERDAY I celebrated my fourth Christmas at the South Pole. Although we have only just passed Midsummer's Day, the temperature is still hovering around 20 degrees below zero.

The festivities were a mixture of familiar traditions and some peculiar to the Pole. A couple of weeks ago the first decorations started to appear, including a tree.

There is no church here but a US Navy chaplain flew in a few nights ago and performed a service in the galley. He even brought an entire brass band with him, made up of volunteers from the Antarctic coastal station of

McMurdo. The Pole is very busy in summer so the holiday lasts only two days, starting on Christmas Eve.

We try to cram a lot of celebrations into that time. The customary wild parties started on Monday night and several people woke up the next day with heads shaved Mohican style to complete their hangovers.

At 11am on Christmas Eve we had our annual race Around the World, a 2.7 mile-long run which took us right around the geographic South Pole and hence through all 24 time zones. Running outside in the cold is hard



enough but the Pole is at an effective altitude of 100,000 ft so the air is very thin and even walking this distance can be difficult for new arrivals. Not everyone chooses to run, though. Some ski, some ride snowmobiles and a few hardy souls try cycling. The atmosphere is more that of a

carnival than a competition.

The race was followed by a gift exchange with some interesting rules. Everyone brings a wrapped present to the galley and places it on the table. People are chosen by lottery and they get to either take a present from the table or "steal" someone else's present if they have

taken a fancy to it. That person then has the same choice. With 170 people on station the process continues for many hours and is lots of fun.

Life at the South Pole can be difficult at times but one luxury we do have is the best food on the continent and at no time is this

more evident than on Christmas Day. Everybody made a special effort to make the day perfect; volunteers formed a small army of helpers to assist the cooks. The galley was transformed with table cloths, decorations and candles and the men and women of the crew who are usually dressed in oily parkas and fleeces suddenly appeared in shirts, ties and evening dresses.

Fortified by several glasses of champagne, my three fellow Brits and I treated the Americans to a rather shaky rendition of the national anthem and they all responded with an even shakier

Star-Spangled Banner. After that the galley erupted into the biggest food fight I have ever seen. They'll be scraping the cream cakes off the wall for weeks.

Our next big celebration will be New Year's Eve, when we hammer the new South Pole marker into the snow. The South Pole is stationary but the ice sheet on which the station sits moves about 30ft each year.

From the new Pole all the previous ones can be seen stretching away into the distance. 2,500 ft away is the Pole that Scott and his men arrived at 85 years ago this coming January 17.

BRITISH ANTARCTIC SURVEY

No cards and no presents, but the snow is guaranteed

BY RUSSELL JENKINS

THEY are dedicated scientists carrying out research vital to the future of the planet in the Earth's most inhospitable landscape, but they do not allow this to disrupt their festivities.

The 90 scientists, geologists and support staff at the British Antarctic Survey's main field research station at Rothera spent their Christmas day taking part in the unofficial South Pole Olympics. Beside ancient gladiators and an icy grey-blue sea, the British contingent competed to push 45-gallon drums filled with water around the station.

Others took part in the pancake race or the "helium-throwing" competition. As Simon Gill, the Rothera station commander and Antarctic veteran, put it: "Going to the

South Pole doesn't make you sensible."

There was little of the privation suffered by Scott and his party during his race to the Pole. Rothera's two professional cooks produced a lavish turkey lunch accompanied by champagne and brandy.

Even the two parties of British scientists spending a less comfortable time on a field trip out on the ice, studying the movement of the gigantic ice shelves, found a piece of Christmas pudding in their sledge packs.

It is summer at the South Pole. Antarctica's thousand hours of sunshine each year are crammed between October and April. Mr Gill said: "We have had sunny days and 24-hour daylight. It doesn't usually get much above zero

but the sunshine can be intense. People can wear T-shirts so long as they slap on lots of suncream."

The biggest privation is the lack of Christmas presents and cards from the outside world. The base receives post once a month when the plane arrives from Port Stanley in the Falkland Islands.

At the moment, there are six sacks of mail lined up waiting to go and none will arrive until the 28th. "It doesn't matter," he said. "We are delayed mail."

Mr Gill, whose family come from near Redcar on the northeast coast, first came to the Antarctic a decade ago. He worked as a carpenter and decided to stay as a spectator to some of the world's most extraordinary flora and fauna.

"Recently I had an amazing experience when we took one of the small 40-horsepower boats out to one of the islands," said Mr Gill. "We were surrounded by six killer whales. They came right up to the boat, swam around us and underneath. It wasn't clear who was more interested, them or us. They were so inquisitive that they followed us all the way back to base."

The South Pole may be the ultimate destination these days for well-heeled package tourists but the scientists who live and work there learn to respect the hostile climate. Mr Gill was mountaineering when a colleague stepped into some loose ice and fell 90ft into a narrow crevasse. He abseiled down, discovered his friend head down but still breathing and helped to haul him back to the surface. "That is the closest I have come to death on the ice," he said.

The Antarctic is an international community with, at its peak, a population of around 3,000. But there is little fraternisation between bases; the nearest is miles away.

Besides the 94 stationed at

Rothera, or those preparing for field trips, there are six British scientists studying the habits of fur seals and the albatross on Bird Island in the South Atlantic. Five geophysi-

cists are stationed at King Edward Point field station, carrying out a seismic investigation into the Earth's structure. Two lonely souls are manning the most remote

museum on earth, the research station at Port Lockroy, and there are 19 scientists on the Halley research station looking into radio waves.

The extreme isolation can

become a problem with more than one person falling victim to "Halley's Stare", looking preoccupied or "not all there".

But, besides the scenery, there is one real consolation

for spending the festive season at one of the loneliest spots on Earth. "At least we are guaranteed we are going to have a white Christmas," said Mr Gill.



Flags snap in the wind as scientists prepare for Christmas at a remote Antarctic field camp. There will be some seasonal cheer in their rations

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Highway Industrial Estate (A127), Chelmsford Retail Plk.

Tel: 01205 520016 •

BIRMINGHAM
Avon Meads Retail & Leisure Park,
St. Philips Causeway, Tel: 01779 726208 •

CAMBRIDGE
The Beehive Centre, Caldecote Lane.

Tel: 01223 720588 •

CHESHIRE
Cheshire Retail Park, Winsford.

Orrell Lane, Orrell, Warrington, Cheshire.

Tel: 01925 425712 •

CHESTERFIELD
Collegiate Retail Park, Tuxbury Rd, Chesterfield.

Tel: 01243 262208 •

CRICKWELL
Saxtey Way, Faversham Retail Park.

Tel: 01795 437172 •

EMBLETON
Next to Selby, Selby, North Yorkshire.

Off Great Cambridge Rd, Tel: 0181 364 6505 •

GLOUCESTERSHIRE
The Ward, Next to Homelane, Off Woodstock Way.

Tel: 01453 225757 •

DRIFFIELD
Driffield Retail Park, Driffield.

Tel: 01377 640000 •

ESSEX
Crown Point Retail Park, Hemsted Lane.

Tel: 0113 2460020 •

LEICESTERSHIRE
Grosvenor Square Retail Park, Off Foss Park.

Tel: 0116 223200 •

LINCOLNSHIRE
165 London Road.

Tel: 01702 747070 •

MILTON KEYNES
Next to Tesco, Winchester Circle, Bletchley.

Tel: 01908 262708 •

NEWCASTLE
Whitethorn Retail Units, London Rd.

Tel: 01433 551766 •

NORTHAMPTON
Riverside Business Park, 17 Fairground Way.

Tel: 01604 780527 •

NOTTINGHAM
Near Nottingham, Sproatton Retail Park.

Saffron Road, Tel: 0115 220204 •

PETERBOROUGH
Mr Salway's, Brotherhood Retail Plk.

Lincoln Rd, Tel: 01733 571050 •

REEDING
Merry Road Park, Pleckgate Road.

Tel: 01753 731666 •

READING
Near Salway's, Brundall Retail Park,

Rose Kit Lane, Tel: 01734 334124 •

RETHFORD
Reherser Industrial Estate, Reherser.

Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, Tel: 0191 444 0500 •

ST ALBANS
St. Albans Retail Park, Griffin Way.

Tel: 01727 67798 •

SALSBURY
Opp. Tesco, Industrial Business Park,

Salisbury Rd, Tel: 01722 441660 •

STEVENSAGE
Rising Moat Retail Park, London Rd.

Tel: 01492 499238 •

SWINDON
Greenbridge Retail Park, Stratton Road.

Tel: 01794 823353 •

THORNTON HILL
Borehole, Hertfordshire Farm Retail Park,

Hertfordshire, Tel: 01727 227480 •

TUNBRIDGE WELLS
North Farm Trading Est., Longfield Rd.

Tel: 01892 255988 •

WATFORD
Opp. Wickes, Colne Bridge Retail Park,

Lower High St, Tel: 01923 227480 •

WESTCLIFFE ON SEA
Essex, Esso Retail Park,

227, London Road.

Tel: 01923 49951 •

WESTON-SUPER-MARE
Next to Tesco, Lakeside Retail Park.

Tel: 01984 810414 •

WIMBLEDON HIGH STREET
Riverside Retail Park, Worl Street.

Tel: 01923 242616 • Last Night Thursday & Friday

MON-FRI 10AM-5PM SAT 10AM-5PM SUN 11AM-5PM

*STORES OPEN UNTIL 1PM THURSDAYS

*STORES CLOSED WEDNESDAYS

**OPEN SUNDAYS

The Sofa Specialists

SALE

for Men & Women. Starts tomorrow.

AUSTIN REED

Look the business. For less.

As you prepare for the midwinter madness that grips the stores, here is our guide to what's on offer . . .

Where early birds get the best bargains

LONDON

Debenhams
334-348 Oxford Street, W1,
and branches nationwide
(0171-408 4444). From Dec 27;
today in Scotland.
Up to 50 per cent off items
throughout the store.

Fenwick
New Bond Street, W1
(0171-629 9101) and branches
nationwide. From Dec 27
for three weeks. Newcastle
from Dec 28.
Up to 50 per cent off items
throughout the store.
Womenswear: Nicole Farhi
velvet jeans from £129 to £59;
John Smedley ribbed cardigan
from £75 to £39; Ben de
Lisi black ribbed wool-mix
jackets from £419 to £209;
Admyra blonde wool and
cashmere long coats from £189
to £79.

Harrods
87 Brompton Road,
Knightsbridge, SW1 (0171-730
1234). From Jan 8-Feb 1.
Up to 55 per cent off items
throughout the store with an
extra 10 per cent off for
Harrods account customers'
purchases made on Jan 11.
Customers spending £200 or
more in a single transaction
during the first four days of
the sale can enter a draw to
win a Volkswagen Passat. Sale
items include up to 75 per cent
off selected John Galliano
womenswear; 40 per cent off
Christian Lacroix eg, ladies'
turquoise jacket was £269, sale
price £89; 40 per cent off
French Connection knitwear,
jackets, coats and skirts; 30
per cent off selected Dolce &
Gabbana; 50 per cent off
Kenzo, Escada and Donna
Karan. Menswear: 30 per cent
off Calvin Klein jeans and
shirts. Armani jeans and
Ralph Lauren; Burberry clas-

sic trench coat was £625, now
£399; Cerutti ties were £55,
now £29.95; 30-50 per cent off
selected childrenswear includ-
ing Paul Smith, Versace and Moschino.

Harvey Nichols

109-125 Knightsbridge,
SW1 (0171-235 5000). From

Dec 27.
Up to 50 per cent off many
items. During the first four
days of the sale there will be
an additional 10 per cent
discount for Harvey Nichols'
account holders on all reduced
merchandise. CK jeans were
£99, sale price £44.50;
Giorgio Armani navy suit
was £695, sale price £495;

women's Dolce & Gabbana
mohair jacket was £780, sale
price £468; Michael Kors
leather trousers were £980,

sale price £490; Calvin Klein
jersey dress was £900, sale
price £450; Dolce & Gabbana
black handbags were £445,

sale price £222.50; Calvin
Klein black handbags were

£430, sale price £215.

House of Fraser

Army & Navy, Victoria

Street, SW1 (0171-834 1234);

Barkers, Kensington High

Street, W8 (0171-937 5432);

Dickins & Jones, Regent

Street, W1 (0171-734 7070);

D.H. Evans, Oxford

Street, W1 (0171-629 8800)

and stores nationwide

(0171-963 2236). From Dec 27.

Scotland: today.

Menswear: up to one third off
Pierre Balmain shirts; 40 per
cent off Pringle knitwear;
Daniel Hechter suit was £230,
now £170; YSL logo boxer
shorts were £16, sale price £8.

Womenswear: up to 50 per
cent off Marley scarfs, dog-

tooth three-quarter length

jacket was £90, now £60; six-

button reefer jacket was £75,

now £49. Homeware: Slumberland

Copper Seal 4-drawer

divan set was £799, now £499;
Henley large sofa was £1,090,
sale price £990. Electrical:
Toshiba 28in colour television
was £649, now £469; JVC
Mini System £499, now £379;
up to 50 per cent off selected
china and glass.

John Lewis
Oxford Street, W1 (0171-
629 7711); Bress Cross
Shopping Centre (0181-
202 6353); Peter Jones, Sloane

Square, SW1 (0171-730

3434) and 23 stores

nationwide. From Dec 28

and Dec 31; call 0171-629 7711

to find which date is

correct for your nearest

branch.

Up to 50 per cent off selected
lines. The "never knowingly
undersold" policy is still in
operation during the clear-
ance period. Branches sell
good quality seconds through-
out the sale and well-priced
lines bought by John Lewis at
favourable rates under its
"special purchase" scheme
with manufacturers. Philips
FW 18 micro Hi-Fi systems
from £329 to £199. China
seconds: Blue Italian 25cm
plates from £8.50 to £4.95;
Toast & Marmalade teapots
from £33 to £19.75; Worcester
cakelapse seconds: Solitaire
plain satin 16.8x13.6cm
from £49 to £25; 21.4x22.0cm
from £35 to £16.50. Dress
fabric seconds: 228cm
cotton/polyester plain sheeting
from £6.50 to £2.95.

Duvets reduced to clear.
Reduced furnishing fabric per
metre: dupion from £7.95 to
£3.95; moire from £9.95 to
£4.95; tapetess from £19.50 to
£9.95 and semi-plain fabrics
from £13.50 to £7; printed
Primrose Hill in grass and
eggshell print from £8.95 to
£4.95; Azalea print from £12.50
to £5.95; Portofino print from
£13.50 to £6.95.



Liberty
214-220 Regent Street, W1,
and branches nationwide
(0171-734 1234). From Dec
27 for three weeks.

Up to 50 per cent off items
throughout the store. Arme-
rian rug was £5,600, sale price

£2,800; Turkish Burdur carpet

was £1,950, sale price £975;

Iranian kilim was £850, sale
price £425; Laure Japy

figurine dinner plates were

£30, sale price £15; Dartington

burgundy glasses were £13.25,

sale price £7.95; Wedgwood

California dinner plates were

£19.95, sale price £9.95; Carré

silver cutlery 44-piece set was

£2,799, sale price £1,399;

traditional roll-arm sofa was

£2,395, sale price £1,195;

Liberty print cushions were

£35, sale price £15. Womens-
wear: Gucci silk hipster pants

were £509, sale price £254;

Romeo Gigli velvet jacket was

£755, sale price £37; Liberty

orange wool jacket was £189,

sale price £94.

Selfridges
Oxford Street, W1 (0171-
629 1234). From Dec 27.

Up to 50 per cent off items
throughout the store.

Womenswear: Jasper Conran

patent jacket down from £499

to £349; CK basic jeans down

from £79 to £55; Polo Ralph

Lauren selected lines up to 30

per cent off. Menswear: Paul

Smith, Giorgio Armani, Le

Colezione and Calvin Klein

selected lines up to 30 per cent

off; selected YSL suits down

from £325 to £225. Childrens-
wear: DKNY, Moschino, Versace
and Armani selected lines all have
50 per cent off. China and crystal:
Dartington crystal selected seconds
40 per cent off; Aynsley tableware
selected seconds 33 per cent
off. Carpets and flooring: 10
per cent off Antico flooring; 12
per cent off Bruce Wood
flooring; 60 per cent off Ter-
raline. Pembrokeshire wool jacket
from £249 to £179; selected
wool knitwear from £49 to
£29.95.

Armand Pollini

35 Brook Street, W1 (0171-
629 7606). From Dec 27 to
early Feb.

From 30 to 50 per cent reduc-
tions: brown knee elastic boho

coat from £199 to £139; black

leather bag from £285 to £142.

Austin Reed

Branches nationwide
(0800 585 479). From Dec 27.

Menswear: barn coat from

£169 to £99; 25 per cent off
selected cotton shirts; half-
price silk ties. Womenswear:

tutu herringbone wool jacket

from £249 to £179; selected
wool knitwear from £49 to
£29.95.

Bentalls

High Street, Bracknell, Berks
(01344 424678); Broadwater

Centre, Ealing, London W5 (0181-567 3040);

Wood Lane, Kingston

upon Thames, southwest
London (0181-567 3040);

Lakeside Shopping Centre,
West Thurrock, Essex

CALL FOR SHOWROOMS IN THE NORTH
0800 616747

MOBEN

Appliances to Clear

RENTALS

REGIONS

APPLIANCES TO CLEAR

... from designer labels to tables. When push comes to shove, Caroline Griffiths has an eye for the best buys



DAVID JUNIPER

- Jaeger**
200-206 Regent Street, W1 (0171-200 4000). 100 stores nationwide, general inquiries (0171-200 4211). From Dec 27. Discounts from 17.5 per cent. Camel cashmere stole from £169 to £99; suede gloves with zebra cuffs from £49 to £24.50; Jaeger London wool mix coat from £350 to £249; Jaeger London brown belted jacket from £320 to £219; brown wide-leg trousers from £140 to £89.
- Oasis**
22 Regent Street, W1, and branches nationwide (0171-452 1000). From today until Jan 15. Up to 50 per cent off selected items, including angora sweaters, shantung silk shirts and shirts, shift dresses and belted jackets.
- Karen Millen**
Branches nationwide (01622 664032). From today. Up to 50 per cent off a range of classic jackets, tops and bodies, 30 per cent off selected jumpers and belts.
- Kinghill Mail Order**
For copies of the Kinghill British Designer Collections catalogue and the Diffusion catalogue (£11 or £10 for a subscription, which is refunded if you place an order) call 01494 880555, or fax 01494 866003. Sale now on. From now, 30 per cent off all designer styles in both catalogues: from Jan 2 until Jan 20, the reductions will increase to 50 per cent and will also include a selection of items from the Christmas catalogue.
- Kookai**
123 Kensington High Street, W8; 25 branches nationwide, inquiries 0171-937 4411. From Dec 27. Up to 30 per cent discount on selected items.
- Lilithwhites**
24-36 Regent Street, SW1 (0171-915 4000). Eight branches nationwide. From Dec 27. Discounts on many lines at 25 per cent off.
- Marks & Spencer**
Marble Arch, Oxford Street, W1 (0171-935 7954); 286 branches nationwide, inquiries 0171-935 4422. From Dec 27. Moorgate branch not included. End of season clearance.
- Miss Selfridge**
Branches nationwide (0181-910 1359). From Dec 27. Up to 50 per cent off selected jackets, ponterona jacket was £55, sale price £25; £10 off tailored trousers; half-price selected coloured suede trousers, now £40; 40 per cent off selected coloured suede safari-style jackets; velour side-split skirts were £35, sale price £15; half-price quilted jackets, fur-collar parkas were £40, sale price £20.
- Monsoon**
Branches nationwide (0171-313 3000). From Dec 27. Up to 50 per cent off autumn/winter collection: Josephine floral print long dress from £70 to £34.97; Aran cardigans from £60 to £34.95; beaded trim twissets from £39.95 to £24.95; velvet evening dress from £85 to £55.
- Mulberry**
41-42 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-491 4233); 185 Brompton Road, SW1 (0171-225 0313); 23-25 Swindgate, York (01904 611055). From Dec 27-Jan 11. Up to 50 per cent off selected items.
- Next**
Three hundred branches nationwide. Inquiries 0116-261 2333. From Dec 27 for two weeks. Up to 50 per cent off most items.
- Nougat**
Nougat at Fenwicks, Brent Cross Shopping Centre (0181-202 8200); House of Fraser, Metro Centre, Gateshead (0191-933 2424); Binns of Middlesbrough (01642 246371); Guilty by Design, Edinburgh (0131-547 8187); Great Clothes Ltd, Leeds.
- Timberland**
72 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-495 1239). Inquiries (0345 669988). From Dec 27. Up to 25 per cent discount.
- Wallis**
217 Oxford Street, W1, and branches nationwide (0181-910 1333). Sale now on.
- Habitat**
Forty stores nationwide (0645 334433). From Dec 27. Furniture: 50 per cent saving.

on metal/Formica-topped folding regata table in blue and up to 30 per cent off sofas made to order in any fabric; 30 per cent off Border bedlinen and 20 per cent off Matarang Sif metal bed. Kitchenware: 50 per cent off Fruit Garden embossed dinnerware range and 50 per cent off Somerset glassware range.

Jerry Home Store
19-21 Argyll Street, W1 (0171-437 7101); 75 branches nationwide, inquiries 0171-278 3491. From Dec 27-Jan 19. Reductions in all departments with up to 20 per cent off most normal stock dining tables, chairs, occasional tables and upholstery; 30 per cent off selected cookware, canteens of cutlery and clear glass vases; 50 per cent off discontinued linens and all basketware at Tottenham Court Road.

The Holding Company
243-245 King's Road, SW3 (0171-352 1600); mail order 0171-610 9160. From Dec 27-Jan 11.

Ten per cent off all chrome racking and shelving systems; 20 per cent off all canvas storage products, fabric-covered boxes and children's plastic storage items.

Jane Churchill
151 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-730 9847); Liberty, Regent Street, W1 (0171-734 1234); 3A Christopher Place, St Albans, Hertfordshire (0127 860293); 13 Fitzroy Street, Cambridge (01223 323211). From Dec 27 in Liberty and from Dec 28 in other stores.

Twenty-five per cent off selected imperforated fabrics and wallpaper. 30 per cent off

selected bedlinen, reductions on all upholstered furniture orders and up to 50 per cent of selected decorative accessories, ceramics, lighting, lampshades, glassware and gift items.

Parves & Parves
80-81 and 83 Tottenham Court Road, W1 (0171-582 2223). From Dec 28-Jan 22.

Up to 40 per cent off ex-display furniture, 10 per cent off any single item over £500 and 50 per cent off discontinued lines of accessories.

The Source
106 Tottenham Court Road, W1 (0171-436 2626); Lakeside Retail Park, West Thurrock, Essex (01708 890253); 10 Harbour Parade, Southampton (01703 336141). From Dec 27.

Up to 50 per cent off selected items, Egyptian cotton duvet sets from £99.95 to £95.95; Ashima bedsheets from £35.95 to £17.95; double patchwork quilts were £79.95, sale price £39.95; single patchwork quilts were £69.95, sale price £34.95; Horrocks bath sheets were £10.50, sale price £8.40; Horrocks hand towels were £3.50, sale price £2.80.

Paperchase
213 Tottenham Court Road, W1, plus 11 other shops nationwide, for nearest branch 0171-580 8486. From Dec 27 to end Jan.

One third off selected Christmas stock. Also knockdown prices on some summer furniture lines, including chairs, candlesticks, vases, stacking boxes and rugs. Large seagrass woven rug is reduced to £5.

The Pier
Stores nationwide, for nearest branch 0171-637 7001. From Dec 27-Jan 19. Price reductions range from 20 to 50 per cent, including Shaker dining chair in green reduced from £75 to £59, Savannah wicker furniture 20 per cent off and Ticking Stripe blue and white porcelain 25 per cent off.

If you are considering taking advantage of the Eurostar £69 day-return to Paris (which begins today and runs to January 10) to brave the French sales this year, bear in mind that the Parisian shopper is a determined and occasionally vicious opponent who, when in pursuit of a bargain, will permit neither

man, woman nor child to stand in her way. In order to avoid massively long queues and the unbelievably sharp Parisian elbow, it is therefore worth trying to get an invitation to the "soldes privés", the private sales to which press and valued customers are invited and which take place a day or two before the general sale. Call the shop in advance to check on the date of private sales:

Galerie Lafayette
40 Boulevard Haussmann, 75009 (42 82 34 56). From today.

Printemps
64 Boulevard Haussmann, 75009 (42 85 86 93). From Jan 2.

"Les grands magasins" provide easy one-stop shopping with an excellent selection of designer fashion for men and women, plus household items such as bedlinen and towels.

The sale at Galeries Lafayette has reductions up to 30 per cent. The sale at Printemps promises reductions on men and women's clothing and household items ranging from 30-40 per cent.

Le Bon Marché
55 Rue du Sévres, 75007 (44 39 80 00). From Jan 2-18. Prices at the elegant Left Bank department store will be marked down by up to 50 per cent on selected items.

Hermès
24 Faubourg St Honoré, 75008 (40 17 17). From Jan 20.

If you are prepared to queue, the coveted Hermès silk scarf can be snatched up at half-price during the sale.

Chantal Thomas
1 Rue Vipienne, 75001 (45 41 07 52). From Jan 2. Beautiful silk lingerie reduced by up to 50 per cent.

Boupoint
65 Rue de l'Université, 75007 (47 05 09 09). From Jan 7. Chic children's shop and the home of traditional smocked dresses for girls and sailor suits for boys: reductions from 30-50 per cent.

Maud Frizon
82 Rue des Saints-Pères, 75006 (42 22 66 93). Sale now on.

The price tags on Maud Frizon's beautiful hand-made shoes have been reduced by 30 per cent.

Christian Dior
30 Avenue Montaigne, 75008 (40 73 54 44). From Jan 6.

Nina Ricci
39 Avenue Montaigne, 75008 (49 52 59 66). From Jan 3. Designer items at vastly reduced prices. Both shops offer up to 50 per cent reductions.

● Information correct at time of going to press. Dates and reductions may change at short notice. Please check with specific shops before making a special trip.

● Additional research by Alex Wijeratne and Susan Bell.

SHARPS bedrooms

JANUARY SALE

It's the Sharps Bedrooms January Sale! In the biggest sale of the year all 84 bedroom styles and finishes are available at HALF PRICE. Sharps are the UK's No. 1 fitted bedroom company, making every bedroom individually.

ALL BEDROOMS HALF PRICE

PLUS IN THE 1ST WEEK ONLY EXTRA £150 OFF

with craftsman precision, maximising the storage space available in your bedroom. And with over 200 Sharps showrooms right across the UK there's one near you. So visit Sharps this week and start the New Year in style.

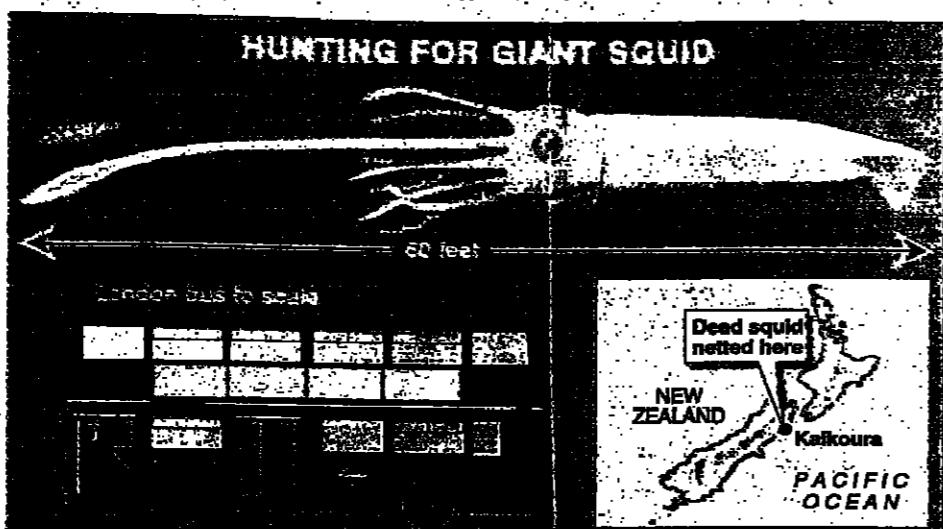
VISIT YOUR NEAREST SHOWROOM OR PHONE FREE 0800 789 789	
BOBBINS (London)	CAMBRIDGE (01223 370043)
BOBBINS (Bath)	NEW LEAMINGTON SPA (Great Malvern) 01527 538128
BOBBINS (Birmingham)	NEED COLOMBO (Harrow) 08153 511676
BOBBINS (Bristol)	LEEDS (0113 243201)
BOBBINS (Cardiff)	LEEDS (0113 243201)
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YOUTH DIES
after night
of drinking
with friends

THE TIMES THURSDAY DECEMBER 26 1996

HOME NEWS 9

Camera crew hunts last great secret of the deep



The crew leaves for New Zealand next month. It will include the Jaws author Peter Benchley, whose book *The Beast* was about giant squid

A modern Captain Ahab pursues his obsession to its lair

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

NEXT month a camera lowered into the deep waters off the South Island of New Zealand may at last track the giant squid to its lair.

Up to 60ft long, with a complex brain, eyes as big as dinner plates and a powerful parrot-like beak, the giant squid is the largest unknown animal on Earth. Although

more than 100 of the creatures have washed up on beaches, or been caught in fishermen's nets, nobody has ever seen one alive in its natural setting, 3,000 feet below the surface of the ocean.

"It's a staggering phenomenon that this big animal exists and we don't know much about it," said Dr Clyde Roper, of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington. Dr

Roper is the leader of the expedition and the Captain Ahab of the giant squid, pursuing it without success for many years.

He hoped originally to raise enough money to hire a submersible and plunge down in pursuit of the giant squid, or *Architeuthis*, but eventually had to settle for a cheaper option, lowering a robotically controlled camera in an attempt to capture at

least a glimpse of the creature. If this proves a success, a second expedition may follow in 1998, with a submersible. The search site, off Kaitoura, has been chosen because several giant squid have been netted there in recent years and it is a favourite area for sperm whales, which live on

squid.

Dr Roper said more was known about long-extinct dinosaurs than about giant squid. Nobody knew how they behaved, how and what they hunted, how they reproduced, or even which way up — head up or head down — they hung in the water. The giant squid has been a staple of fiction since the days of Homer, whose description of the sea monster Scylla, in *The Odyssey*, may have been based on *Architeuthis*, as may be the mythical Scandinavian kraken, a sea monster believed to dwell off Norway.

In *Moby Dick*, Herman Melville portrayed "a vast pulpy mass... innumerable long arms radiating from its centre, curving and twisting like a nest of anacondas, as if blindly to catch at any hapless object within reach".

The fascination has continued to the modern day, fed by ignorance. Peter Benchley, author of *Jaws*, turned to the giant squid in his 1991 book *The Beast*, now made into a television mini-series, the first part of which will be shown on ITV at 9pm tonight. Benchley will be part of Dr Roper's "expedition" along with Emory Kristof, a photog-

rapher from *National Geographic* magazine, and Teddy Tucker, a monster enthusiast from Bermuda.

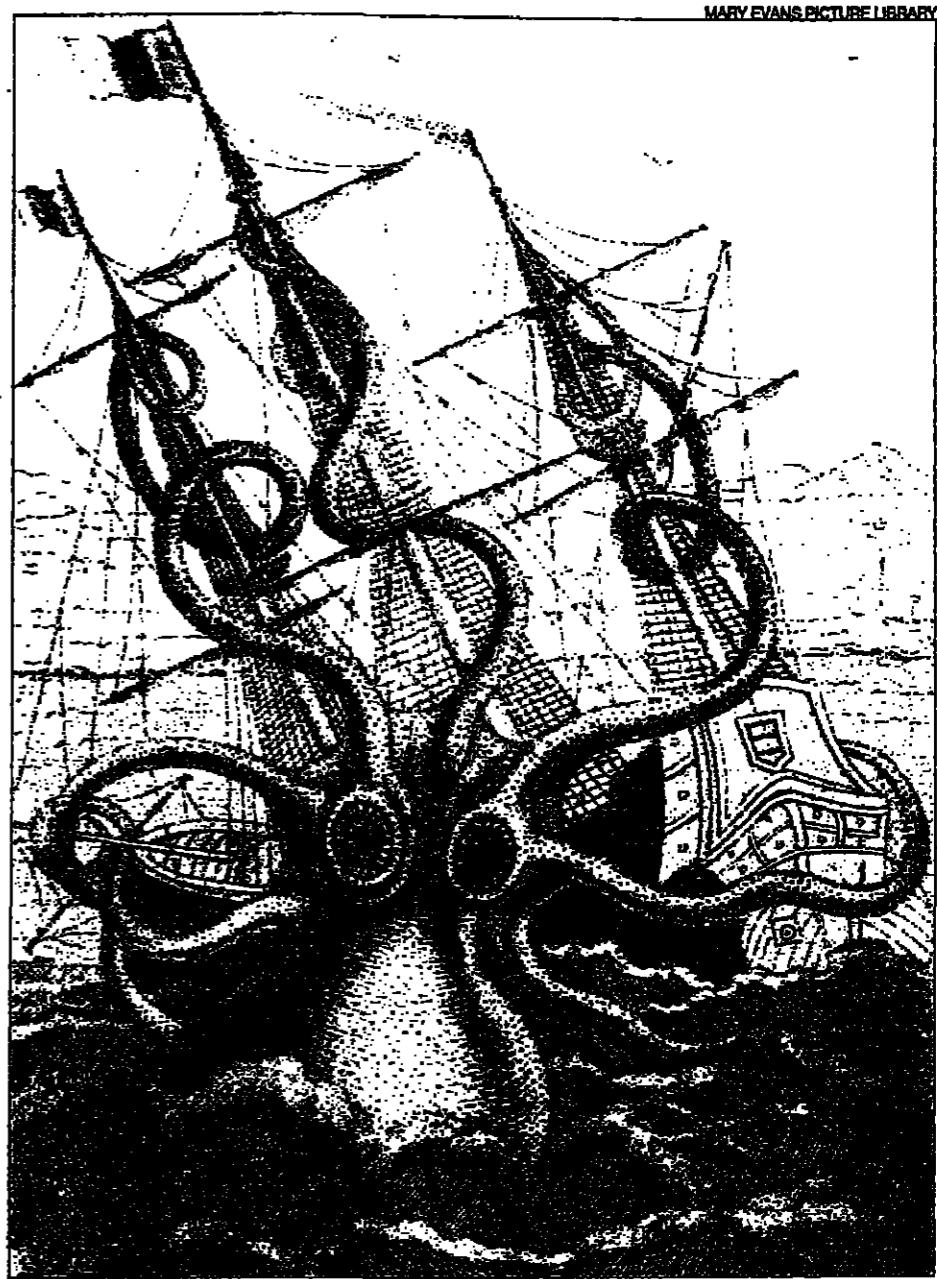
Until the end of the 18th century, giant squid were towed out to sea to be dumped, or were fed to dogs. Since then, scientists have been collecting specimens more systematically, not only from beaches and nets, but also from the stomachs of whales.

Virtually every sperm whale harpooned in the days of whaling was found to have sharp squid beaks in its stomach. Dr Roper estimated that a 50-ton sperm whale might eat three or four half-ton giant squid a day. If so, there must be many giant squid in the darkness, thousands of feet below the surface of the oceans.

How deep remains yet another squid mystery, but it will certainly be dark and, unlike many sea creatures, the giant squid does not glow.

It may be attracted to the camera light and swim towards it, enabling the scientists to take a decent picture. If it stretches out a great arm loaded with suckers, so much the better.

If the expedition comes back with even a minute of film "it will be one of the greatest accomplishments of 20th-century marine biology," said Richard Ellis, author of *Monsters of the Sea*, who is now writing a book about giant squid.



Sea monsters have been staples of fiction for centuries, from the kraken, above, to Hollywood's interpretation of the hunt for *Moby Dick*, starring Gregory Peck



Leading article, page 19

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COMET



Kayleigh Ward: missing

Missing schoolgirl urged to call home

By RICHARD FORD

THE search for missing schoolgirl Kayleigh Ward will resume today. Kayleigh, aged nine, has not been seen since she left a hostel where she lived with her mother to buy some chips for a neighbour a week ago.

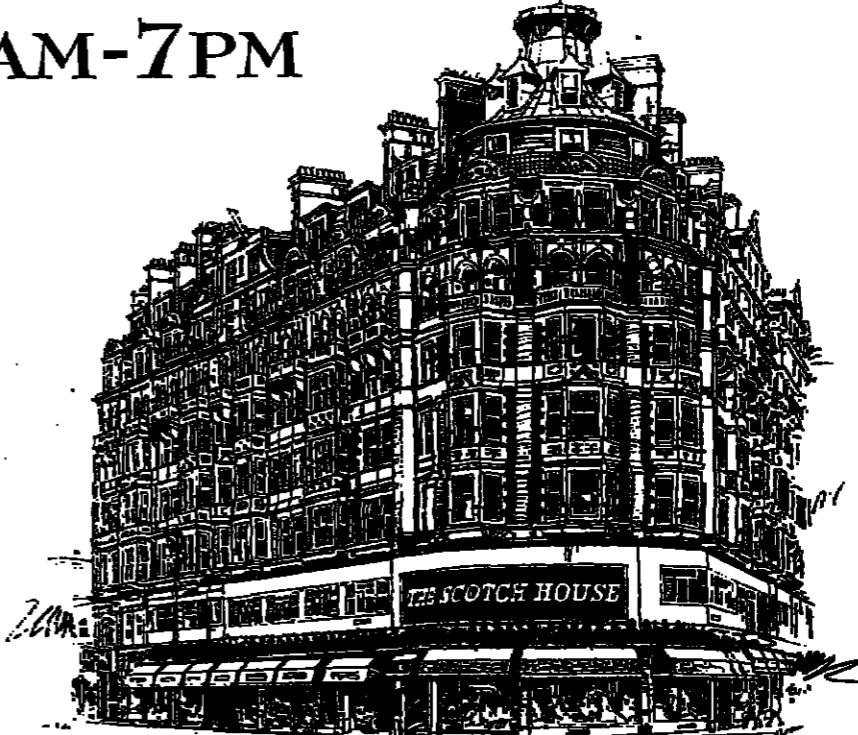
Detective Superintendent David Jones, leading the inquiry, said yesterday: "Quite honestly, I think somebody has her — not perhaps against her will. She may well be quite happy to be with them."

Police have scaled down their hunt for the "streetwise" child, who confidently chatted with vagrants and tramps in Chester city centre on Christmas Eve. Instead of a team of 170, a squad of 40 officers were involved in the search yesterday, concentrating on specific areas in response to information from the public.

Mr Jones appealed to anyone who might have Kayleigh to allow her to ring home and speak to her mother. Yvonne Ward, 36, spent Christmas Day at the hostel in Chester. The CD player she had planned to give her daughter unopened. She failed to raise the alarm over her daughter until Friday night in the mistaken belief that she had gone to stay with other members of the family in Chester. She said: "This is a nightmare. We just haven't slept, can't eat. But it's not her. She wouldn't do this to me."

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The courage of children in hospital at Christmas

BY JOHN YOUNG

ESME FRANCIS, aged 16½ months, is spending her second Christmas at the Evelina children's hospital, being treated for a genetic kidney disorder. Both kidneys were removed when she was four months old because neither was functioning and her blood pressure was dangerously high.

She is now on dialysis awaiting a transplant, which is unlikely to take place for several months because of the risk of rejection at such an early stage. She cannot absorb food properly and is dependant on drugs and intravenous feeding.

Her parents, Beverley and Steven, of Isleworth, west London, spent last Christmas at the hospital, which is the paediatric wing of the Guy's and St Thomas's Hospital Trust in London. This year they had hoped to celebrate it at home. Despite having been twice readmitted with pneumonia and a chest infection, Esme appeared to be reasonably well until last Friday,

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too worried about her." Two floors above, Thabassum Rahman is spending her first Christmas at the Evelina. Aged just over three months, she has already undergone two operations for a defective heart and was released from intensive care only 72 hours ago.

Normally the second operation would have been postponed until the age of six or seven months but it had to be brought forward because of other cardiac complications. However, the prognosis is encouraging.

Her parents, Ruji and Moshin, originally from Bangladesh but now living in Manor Park, east London, are resigned to spending the holiday at the bedside of their first-born child.

Carol Williams, clinical nurse specialist at the Evelina, said: "It is more difficult to assess how much pain children are suffering, because in many cases they have never experienced serious pain before. They don't understand why they are in pain and can't always tell us



Steven Francis with his daughter Esme, who is awaiting a kidney transplant at the Evelina children's hospital

how they feel. We have got to be very good at recognising symptoms."

The Evelina children's hospital treats some 110,000 children a year, either at

Guy's or at "outreach" clinics throughout the southeast of England. It employs some 600 staff, among them some of the most highly skilled and motivated paediatric nurses

in the world. The Times Christmas Appeal has so far raised more than £30,000, money urgently needed to pay for equipment and technical developments which do not attract National Health Service funding. At this special time of year we thank our readers for their generosity and invite many more contributions.

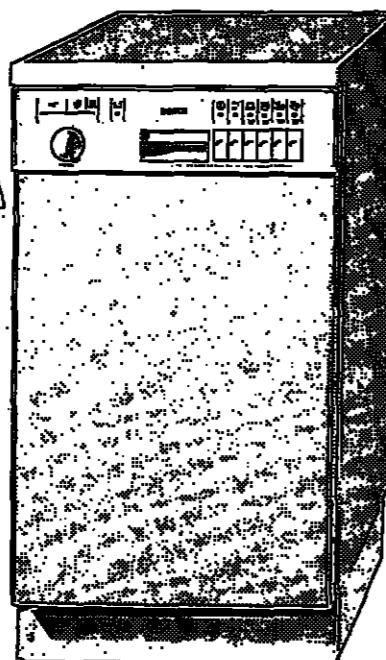
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Family claims deportation is death warrant

BY BILL FROST

A CROATIAN family given refuge in Britain after their home was overrun by Serbs are to be deported on New Year's Day to face what they say will be almost certain death.

Vlatko Sokcevic joined a special forces unit during the siege of Vukovar in 1991. The bloody battle for the town, followed by a massacre of civilians, saw friends and relatives pitted against each other in an ethnically mixed corner of Eastern Slavonia.

Mr Sokcevic, a business graduate, settled with his wife and two daughters in Hungerford, Berkshire, four years ago. A petition submitted to the Home Office urging that the family be allowed to stay has been signed by almost 4,000 local people. However, Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, has refused them asylum. Home Office officials have told the family that their circumstances are not "sufficiently compassionate or compelling to justify allowing them to remain here".

Mr Sokcevic, his wife Evica and daughters Ivana, 11, and Tena, 4, fled the flames of Vukovar for the Croatian capital, Zagreb. They have since been joined by Mr Sokcevic's mother, Stefica, 64. Ivana said: "They spat at us in the street, called us dirty refugees. It was horrible."

"Girls at school beat me. They seemed to hate us, even though we are all Croatian. Here in Hungerford we have been accepted and I have lots of friends. Tena and I do not just speak English, we think in English. Why do they want to send us to a place where we are not safe?"

Vukovar remains occupied by the Serbs. The surrounding area contains at least

100,000 landmines, according to the latest United Nations estimate.

Mr Sokcevic, 35, said: "I am terrified at the prospect of going back. At very best, it is as if the Home Secretary cast us adrift in the ocean on a raft. In reality, though, it is much worse. Vlatko faces certain death; all the Serbs know he was with special forces trying to break the siege."

"He fought with the elite and that means he faces certain death. We all might, because this is not a war where people forgive and forget; men, women and even tiny children all pay the price."

Mr Sokcevic said: "There is a price on my head because I resisted. There is blood on my hands, but it was kill or be killed when the town fell and we fought street by street. I killed men I knew before they could kill me. But what alternative was there? What would Michael Howard have done to protect his family?"

"Just before we fled I saw a Serb man, who had been a very close friend, in the window of a gutted house near our position. For a moment I forgot the war and remembered the good times. I waved to him and then saw he was taking aim at me. I fired first and he went down."

David Rendel, the Liberal Democrat MP for West Berkshire, who has taken a keen interest in the family's case, is angry and disappointed at the deportation order, appealed that they are to be sent home.

"This is very sad news," he said. "Throwing them out when they have nowhere else to go, in this of all seasons, is an appalling way to treat a family."

Milosevic accused, page 15



The Sokcevic family, from left, Stefica, Tena, Ivana, Vlatko and Ivana face deportation on January 1

Blinking badges cut through small talk

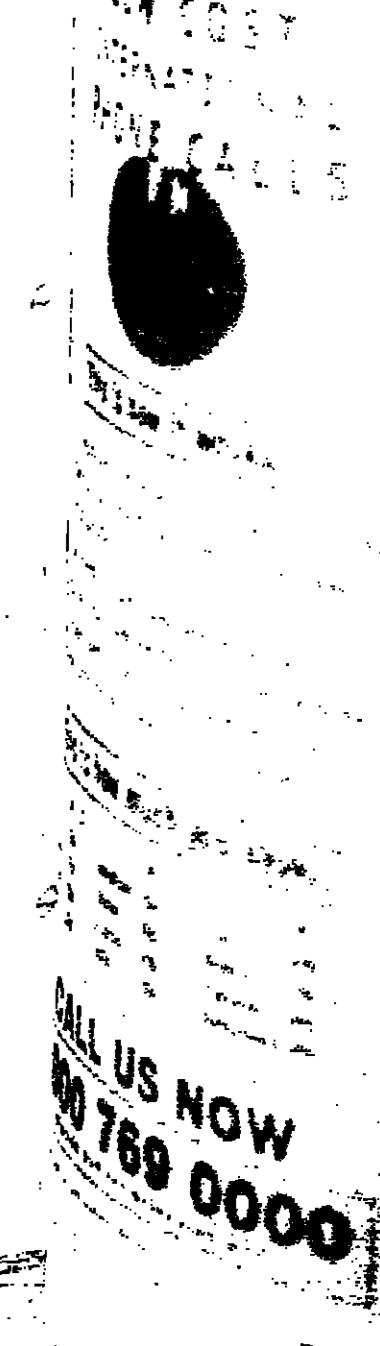
BY A STAFF REPORTER

ELECTRONIC ice-breakers could spark a social revolution in the new decade by overturning the traditions of the dating game. The devices, already being played by the electronics group Philips, will allow strangers with similar interests, likes or dislikes, to spot each other instantly without wasting time on small talk.

Nicknamed "hot badges" and small enough to be disguised as a tie pin or brooch, they are short-range communicators which can be programmed with personal information. When one badge comes within range of

another they "talk" electronically via radio messages. If the owners share enough similar interests their badges light up or bleep. However, mitters are likely to be complicated as people programme their badges with false information or unusual sexual preferences.

Simon Turner, a Philips researcher, said: "There is nothing to stop us producing a crude type of hot badge now, and a useable version might be only three years away. I don't think it will detract from social skills, but it might change them and make us develop new ones."



Mormons prosper as pews and coffers fill

FROM GILES WHITTELL IN SALT LAKE CITY

AN ARCTIC wind off the Great Salt Lake was keeping pilgrims and the merely curious away from the Christmas lights in Temple Square, but in his sumptuous office upstairs nothing could dim the spirits of one of the world's 15 holiest Mormons.

"We will never, never give up," boomed Elder Jeffrey Holland, an "Apostle" of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints who believes he is a professional heir to Moses and St Paul.

Indeed, there seems little danger of the Mormons abandoning their drive to convert all souls, living and dead, to what they consider the only authentic form of Christianity. One hundred and fifty years after founding Salt Lake City, and a century after renouncing polygamy, their organisation remains vulnerable to ridicule. It is, however, bigger, richer and more powerful than ever.

The Mormons endured persecution before their epic trek and derision for their multiple wives after it

Tables from which it is supposed to have been translated have been "lost". Yet this is the text that inspired the Mormons' trek over the Rockies in 1847 to the upland basin that Brigham Young declared their promised land, and it is now the basis of one of the world's fastest-growing creeds.

Best known for eschewing

nicotine, tobacco and even coffee, the Mormons endured persecution before their trek and derision for their multiple wives after it. Nowadays they number nearly ten million worldwide, with business interests earning an estimated \$3 billion (£4.8 billion) a year and a close-knit leadership

ing that the Mormons' priority is winning souls to God. Nevertheless, prime Mormon property still dominates Salt Lake City's booming business district, while Mormon-owned television and radio stations thrive.

Even the missionary work performed by young Mormons in 159 countries is inherently profitable, since the missionaries travel at their own expense but converts take their pre-tax incomes to headquarters in Salt Lake City. As one Wall Street trader told *Time* magazine: "All they do there is breed, pray and make money."

Nowhere is this prosperity more evident than in the Joseph Smith Memorial Building, a former hotel opposite the Salt Lake City temple lavishly restored in time for the coming 150th anniversary celebrations. A ballroom has been converted as a chapel. On the tenth floor two octagonal



The 166th two-day General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints gathers in Salt Lake City

restaurants give superb views over the temple's spires to the desert, while a shop in the basement does a roaring trade in video sermons. (Tithing forms are free.)

For all its opulence, the Church faces charges of hypocrisy and intolerance. Last month it was acutely embarrassed by the arrest and resignation of a 51-year-old

queen, made headlines in 1978 by kidnapping the devout young Kirk Anderson for sex sessions in fur-lined manacles. Not since Joyce McKinney, a failed beauty

warrant, been so compromised.

Saints lose struggle to keep Salt Lake dry

BRUCE GARDNER, a lapsed Mormon, reached for another four-pint jug to fill with "Irish Wasatch Stout" and offered a weary analysis of drinking in what used to be the teetotal capital of the world (Giles Whittell writes in Salt Lake City).

The biggest problem with drinkers here, he said from behind the taps in the Squatters Pub, not half a mile from the Salt Lake Tabernacle, "is that most are graduated Mormons and can't handle it. They end up getting pregnant or a social disease or into a fight."

He added swiftly that "overall, Mormons are really nice". But as Salt Lake City prepares to welcome the world for the 2002 Winter Olympics, they have lost their long battle to keep their long battle to

Until the late 1980s, in deference to Mormons' belief that the body is an extension of God's temple and should not be defiled by stimulants, even cocktail trolleys on airliners closed down as they passed through Utah airspace at 30,000ft. But despite resistance from Mormon elders, Salt Lake City's liquor laws have been so diluted in recent years that a good burgundy is not much harder to find than Temple Square.

Offices are run by the state with special taxes going towards school lunches and the treatment of alcoholism



Rising Mormons: sketch of a temple for Preston

but they stay open until 10pm, six nights a week. Bars are run as clubs, but "temporary membership" is free with "sponsorship" from a friendly local. Restaurants may now serve wine at the table instead of requiring customers to take their own.

"Our reaction is one of dismay, because we don't think alcohol is good for people," Elder Jeffrey Holland, of the Mormon Council of Apostles, said. "Our bodies are the temple of God, inseparably linked to the spirit to constitute the soul of man."

For the faithful, frozen tropical fruit drinks are available at the alcohol-free Garden Restaurant a few steps from the Salt Lake Temple. Jollier souls have a somewhat wider choice.

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Lima hostages pray as talks remain stalled

AT LEAST 105 hostages, still held inside the Japanese Ambassador's residence by heavily armed Tupac Amaru guerrillas, spent their Christmas praying around a handful of candles and eating panettone (Italian Christmas cake) and chocolate. They were heard singing carols and holding midnight Mass.

Their ordeal looks set to continue for days, however, as tense negotiations over their release remain deadlocked. Yesterday the hostages, mainly Peruvian government figures and Japanese businessmen, faced their ninth day in a building that has had no electricity or running water for days.

Red Cross workers wheeled 105 sushi and fried noodle meals and some bottles of wine into the besieged building as Christmas lunch for the hostages. Blurred television pictures showed the captives slumped on floors.

President Fujimori sent letters yesterday to Ryutaro Hashimoto, the Japanese Prime Minister, and the Pope, assuring them that he would find a peaceful solution to the hostage crisis. He has also repeatedly insisted, however, that he will not make deals with the terrorists.

President Yeltsin yesterday wrote to Señor Fujimori and called on the Group of Seven



As the hostages tucked into sushi and wine, President Fujimori kept to his tough line, reports Gabriella Gaminu

leading industrialised nations to join forces to help to resolve the hostage crisis. He suggested that a joint declaration of the Group of Eight (the G7, plus Russia) should offer "co-ordinated assistance in resolving the conflict, including the possible dispatch of anti-terrorist squads from national security services". However, several G7 members, including the United States, Britain and Germany, sent special forces to Lima last week.

The Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) rebels, who have explosives strapped to their bodies and

make deals with them. Such impressions signify a setback in the crisis; I am not going to give in," he said.

The guerrillas released Señor Bocalandro at 6.30pm on Christmas Eve, only hours after a Uruguayan judge released two suspected Tupac Amaru rebels from a Montevideo prison. The two suspected terrorists, Luis Alberto Samaniego (alias El Negro) and Sonia Silvia Gora Rivera (alias Comrade Nancy), had been arrested by Interpol in Montevideo last December. They were accused of taking part in the kidnapping of a former Bolivian government minister, held for 56 days.

The rebels inside the ambassador's residence have also asked for improved prison conditions for their leaders held in isolation in underground cells. Their leader, Victor Polay Campos, arrested two years ago, is kept in a soundproof underground bunker in the port of Callao outside Lima, and has not seen anyone in months.

The demand suggested that the rebels could be open to a bargain. However, the release so far of hundreds of hostages is no sign that the rebels are giving in. They now have a much more manageable number of hostages and appear ready to hold out for weeks to come.

Harassment condemned

Tokyo: Ryutaro Hashimoto, the Japanese Prime Minister, condemned some of his countrymen yesterday for harassing Peruvian residents since the beginning of the Lima siege.

"It is a shame. No one must harass [Peruvian residents] when we are fighting terrorists," he told reporters.

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Eduardo Laos, freed on Saturday, prays with his son, Eduardito, for those still held

Martin Luther King's killer will take secret to the grave

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

A TRAUMATIC chapter of American history drew to a close yesterday as James Earl Ray, the convicted assassin of Martin Luther King, slipped into a coma without providing new details of his crime.

Civil rights activists had hoped for a dramatic deathbed confession confirming their long-held suspicion that Ray did not act alone in the 1968 murder, which sparked race riots across the United States.

However, Ray, 68, who was moved from prison last month to a hospital in Nashville, Tennessee, was said to be in the final stages of cirrhosis of the liver and was not expected to survive.

Ray, a white petty thief, was sentenced to 99 years' imprisonment for shooting King in Memphis, where the black leader had gone to support a strike of sanitation workers.

Police found a rifle and said it had been fired from a second-floor bathroom in a nearby hostel. Fingerprints on the weapon were identified as belonging to Ray, who was tracked to Atlanta, Toronto, London, Portugal and finally back to London, before being arrested by Scotland Yard detectives. Ray pleaded guilty to the killing and was sentenced without trial but he quickly recanted and spent years in jail seeking a full court hearing. He claimed that he bought the rifle in an Alabama sports shop for the real killer, a mystery accomplice named "Kaoul" whom he purportedly met in Montreal.

Civil rights activists have long believed that Ray was part of a wider plot and urged him to repent before it was too late.

Ray's brother, Jerry, claimed the FBI was behind the plot against King. He said Ray's ashes would be scattered on the FBI building in Washington.

Clinton says 'no' to black English

FROM IAN BRODIE
IN WASHINGTON

THE idea of recognising black English as a second language has been rejected by President Clinton.

With his backing, Richard Riley, the Education Secretary, announced that school boards would not be entitled to federal funds for bilingual education to support black English in their classrooms.

The announcement was a pre-emptive strike against the predominantly black city of Oakland, California, where the school board voted unanimously last week to recognise black English as a second language.

The board ordered its officials to devise and implement a programme to teach black students in "their primary language", black English, to maintain the legitimacy of the language and to help them to learn standard English.

The idea of treating black students who, for example, say "he bin" instead of he has been, as if they were speaking a foreign language, has provoked a political backlash across America and has divided black educators.

By joining the opponents, Mr Clinton may have upset blacks who voted for him, but he believes that supporting black English as a separate language can only stigmatise and hinder those who speak it.

Mr Riley said: "Elevating black English to the status of a language is not the way to raise standards of achievement in our schools and for our students."

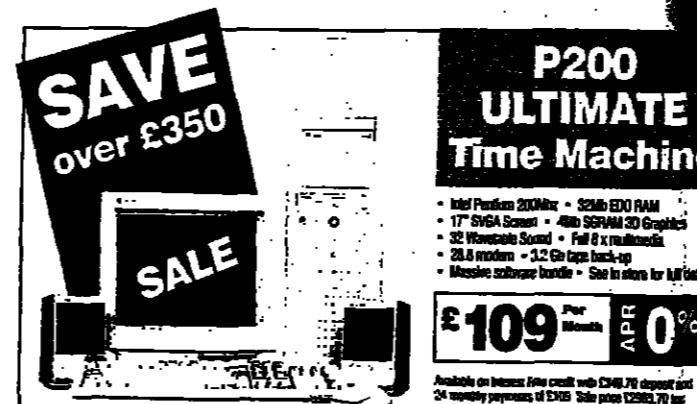
Black English, or Ebonics—from ebony and phonics—is a non-standard form of English and not a foreign language, Mr Riley said. Schools using Ebonics would not qualify for federal bilingual funds that are provided to teach English to students who speak Spanish or 100 other languages as their primary tongue.

Oakland's school board had noted that academics had traced black English back through the descendants of slavery to its roots on the west coast of Africa.

It hoped that teachers recognising the speech patterns of black English will be better able to inspire black students in standard English.

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TIME



Troops and settlers clash as hopes rise for Hebron pullout

FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

ISRAELI security forces clashed with Jewish settlers in Hebron yesterday during demonstrations against plans to hand most of the West Bank town over to Palestinian self-rule.

Soldiers and police scuffled with settlers in the streets and on rooftops as Israeli and Palestinian negotiators moved closer to an agreement over the future of the town. Under the proposed plan, Israeli troops would withdraw from 80 per cent of Hebron.

Noam Arnon, a spokesman for the Jewish settlers in Hebron, said yesterday that Israelis, including government ministers, were being kept in the dark about the dangers of the proposed accord.

"I think the people of Israel do not know the details of the agreement, even cabinet ministers," he said. "The details are very bad [for the security of Jewish settlers]."

He defended yesterday's occupation of two homes in Hebron's Arab market by Jewish settlers.

Mr Arnon said that the homes, and other apartments, were being renovated for the use of Palestinian terrorists who had recently been released from jail. "The problem

is that the Palestinian Authority now wants hundreds of released terrorists to be located in these apartments around Jewish neighbourhoods, in order to cause terror actions and provocations," he said.

About 15 Jews were arrested after soldiers evicted the settlers from the flats. Later Palestinians threw two petrol bombs at a Jewish home in Hebron. No one was hurt.

Hebron's Arab Mayor, Mustafa Natshe, rejected Mr Arnon's claims that Jewish settlers would be in danger when the troops withdrew. He said the Palestinian Authority had controlled all other major towns in the West Bank for more than 12 months. "The situation is better than before, when the Israeli Army was there," he said.

More than 400 Jewish settlers live and study in the centre of Hebron, surrounded by more than 100,000 Palestinian residents.

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators in Jerusalem worked throughout the day to reach an agreement on the long overdue troop redeployment. A Palestinian official said he expected an accord to be completed within a week.

Progress was reported after

a summit on Tuesday between Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and the Palestinian President, Yasser Arafat, at the Erez Crossing on the border with the Gaza Strip.

Dennis Ross, the American Middle East peace envoy who has brokered the latest negotiations, said the two sides had "made real progress" before flying back to Washington to brief President Clinton last night.

After the document is initialled by the two leaders, it will be taken before the Israeli and Palestinian Authority Cabinets before being signed.

M. Netanyahu is expected to face opposition from Ariel Sharon, his National Infrastructure Minister, who has told cabinet colleagues that the agreement is weak on security.

□ Arafat visit: Mr Arafat was one of tens of thousands of pilgrims who flocked to Bethlehem on Christmas Eve. It was his second Christmas in the West Bank city since Palestinian self-rule was introduced in Bethlehem 12 months ago.

On Monday, his Christian-born wife, Suha, lit a modest tree in the town's Manger Square to begin the celebrations.



Israeli police remove Jewish settlers from a roof in Hebron during protests against a plan to withdraw troops

Terror keeps the tourists out of Manger Square

*O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by*

The soothing words of the carol belie the modern reality of economic hardship, seething Palestinian frustration, religious differences and potential terrorist violence that lie just below the surface in the birthplace of Jesus.

Less than 300 yards from the fourth-century Church of the Nativity, which many believe marks the spot where Mary went into labour, hand-knitted blue-and-green balaclava masks for terrorist use, with slits for the eyes and mouth, are openly on sale. Residents said that they were used both by the radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement.

To those familiar with the growing militancy of Bethlehem youth, it came as no surprise last week when the Palestinian Authority announced that one of three members of the PFLP given long jail sentences for the recent ambush, which killed two Jewish settlers, a mother and her 12-year-old son, in the occupied West Bank came only two guests.

Michael Kreitem, the manager, said cancellations were pouring in. He showed a typical letter of cancellation from a British group organised by the De La Salle Brothers. "You — as I am — are worried about the present situation and the wisdom or folly of going to Israel when there is such turmoil in the areas where most of our shrines exist," wrote the organiser.

The same gloomy picture was painted by a Franciscan who produced records to show the number of pilgrims had dropped by 30 per cent.

"It is now even worse than during the most violent days of the [1987-1993] Palestinian intifada," he said, speaking at the church marking the area where tradition says the angel appeared before the shepherds "keeping watch over their flocks by night".

Around Manger Square, Palestinian anger was tangible at the Bezeq Field souvenir shop where the new owner, Jamal Khouri, who had plunged his life's savings into the enterprise, in an attempt to cash in the so-called "peace dividend" so widely spoken of at the time of the 1993 Israeli-Palestinian peace accord, stood amid shelves of untouched merchandise.

Some of the worst fighting took place on the outskirts of

At the end of his
Middle Eastern
journey,
Christopher
Walker, reports
on Bethlehem's
growing gloom

Bethlehem, around Israeli-controlled Rachel's Tomb, now being ringed with a new wall against suicide bombers. As a result, on the second Christmas since Israeli military control gave way to Palestinian self-rule, there were more rooms vacant in Bethlehem's "inns" — its six main hotels, and assorted religious hostels that at any time since the Israeli conquest of the city from Jordan in the 1967 Six-Day War. At the end of last week, the 72-room Bethlehem Star hotel had only two guests.

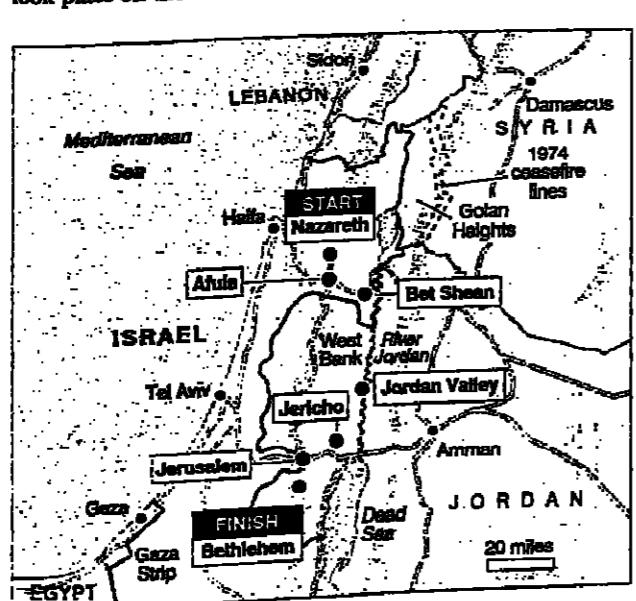
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Greetings from the Pope in 55 languages

FROM REUTER
IN ROME

THE Pope wished the world a happy Christmas in 55 languages yesterday, but said the spirit of the nativity was marred by tensions in the Holy Land and international indifference to the tragedy in Africa.

In his *Urbi et Orbi* blessing and message, the 76-year-old Polish pontiff said Christmas meant not being resigned to violence and injustice, but striving to overcome hatred and returning to dialogue.

The Pope spoke to thousands in a rainy St Peter's Square, uttering greetings in languages from Arabic and Hebrew to tongues spoken in Burundi and Rwanda.

"The echo of the songs of Christmas must travel much farther," he said. "It must resound beyond walls where the clash of arms is still heard, shattering the spell of peace brought by this holy day."

The Pope, who was celebrating his 19th Christmas as leader of the world's 960 million Roman Catholics, has suffered a series of health problems in recent years. He celebrated midnight Mass in St Peter's Basilica, but missed the Christmas Day Mass on doctors' advice, underlining the fact that age is eroding his stamina.

Photograph, page 22

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Islamists warn Chirac of terror campaign

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

ALGERIAN Islamic fundamentalists, in a letter to President Chirac, have issued a warning that they plan to continue their terror campaign in France, threatening to "destroy your country".

The letter, written in Arabic and delivered on Christmas Eve, urges M Chirac to cut all links with Algiers and intervene on behalf of extremists imprisoned in Algeria. It comes three weeks after a bomb exploded on a Paris train, killing four people in what was interpreted as a resumption of Islamic violence on French soil.

The letter, from the extremist Armed Islamic Group, makes an implicit claim of responsibility for the attack, saying: "We are engaged on the path of massacres and killing. We do what we say. The events of the past few days prove it."

Last year the group was behind a wave of bombings which left eight people dead

and scores injured. Its latest threat, delivered on the second anniversary of the hijacking of an Air France Airbus by fundamentalists, will raise fears that France is facing a repeat of the 1995 campaign.

In the letter, which was also sent to the Agence France-Presse news agency in Paris, the group tells M Chirac that he must meet a list of demands if "you want us to stop killing you". It calls, for example, for the liberation of one of its leaders, Abu Adlan Abdelhaq Layada, who is in an Algerian prison after his arrest in Morocco in 1993.

The extremists who hijacked the Air France plane on Christmas Eve, 1994, before they were shot dead by French police, also demanded his release. The group's letter, which was signed by its "emir", Antar Zouari, called on M Chirac to end all support for President Zeroual's regime in Algiers. France has drawn the fundamentalists' wrath by

offering the Algerian Government significant financial help. Finally, the group says that unless the French administration pays it a "tribute" it will continue to kill French citizens in Algeria.

The demands are manifestly beyond the reach of M Chirac's Government, which has adopted a tough stance towards Islamic fundamentalism. But the Algerian fundamentalists do not appear to be aware of or concerned by political reality: at the height of last year's campaign they wrote to M Chirac urging him to "convert to Islam".

The 1995 bombings ended when French police shot dead Khaled Kelkal, a French-born Muslim who had been recruited along with other militants into the fundamentalist guerrilla ranks. Information found in his diary enabled detectives to track down and arrest the ringleaders and break up the three "military units" operating in Paris, Lille and Lyons.

However, the French secret service has said that the Armed Islamic Group — in practice a fragmented network of extremist cells — would try to re-establish itself. Evidence that its fears were founded came with the Paris Metro bomb on December 3. Then this week the legal authorities announced they had broken up a ten-man fundamentalist cell, described as "potentially dangerous". Paris hopes that these arrests will prevent the extremists from carrying out their threats against France.

However, given the shadowy nature of the Armed Islamic Group and the extent of the support it enjoys among French Muslims in the poor suburbs around France's main cities, the authorities remain wary.

The intense security operation, codenamed Vigipirate, which was put in place after the Metro bomb, will be maintained for the foreseeable future. Paris says.

Multik, a macaque monkey, sits in a space capsule before being put aboard a Russian spacecraft that was launched into orbit around Earth from the Plesetsk Cosmodrome in Russia, 300 miles below the Arctic Circle, on Tuesday (Thomas de Waal writes).

Two monkeys are on board — despite the protests of animal rights activists — as part of a Russian-French project on weightlessness. "Captain" Multik, three, and Lanik, four, will stay in a four-square-yard capsule for 14

days before being parachuted back to Earth in northern Kazakhstan or the southern Urals.

The monkeys have had space training, learning to eat and drink through tubes, to while away their hours in orbit.

Monkeys back in space

They have been taught to press pedals and computer keys in return for injections of juice. The programme's scientists are delighted that the monkeys have mastered computers and are letting them play computer games to while away their hours in orbit.

Patten presides over the end of a Christmas era

BY JAMES PRINGLE

HONG KONG yesterday celebrated its last Christmas under British rule and, as the RTHK government radio station broadcast the Queen's Christmas message, there was a decided "end of an era" feel to this vibrant city, now quite visibly preparing for its new rulers from Peking.

Royal insignia are being removed from government buildings already, and on Christmas Eve the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals here announced that it would drop the "royal" from its title on January 1, six months before China resumes sovereignty.

The RSPCA thus joins other venerable Hong Kong institutions such as the Jockey Club in severing the royal connection. The future SPCA said it would retain some contact with the parent body in Britain, but would establish closer links with animal welfare groups, such as exist in China.

As it has for the past 147 years, the cream of Hong Kong's fading colonial society gathered under the slowly rotating ceiling fans at St John's Anglican Cathedral for a nostalgic midnight service on Christmas Eve, joined by hundreds of Chinese Christians and Filipino domestic staff. The latter, though mostly Roman Catholics, seemed quite happy to sing carols and to pray — possibly for the

history". Last night he hosted an hour-long radio programme of classical music, but he included Pete Seeger's *Turn, Turn, Turn*, Jimmy Durante's *As Time Goes By*, and *Amazing Grace*. "I hope all is well with you this Christmas," he told listeners. "And I hope it will be well for you next year and for all the years after that in this, one of the greatest cities of the world."

Elsewhere in Hong Kong, a pub party turned into a street battle between highly paid British labourers, some with painted and tattooed faces, in Wan Chai, the once rambunctious area made famous in the 1950s novel *The World of Suzie Wong*.

Soldiers of the British garrison tried to break it up, but the workers, some of several thousand Britons working on the new airport and other construction projects, turned on them, trashing a 7-Eleven store as they cleared the shelves of bottles to use as weapons. "It was really crazy," said a barman. "In the end the streets were littered with people lying unconscious and covered in blood."

But, whatever happens, Christmas will not die out quickly in Hong Kong, even though only 8 per cent of the population is Christian: it will remain a two-day holiday under China's system of "one country, two systems".

Outrage as three die in Cape bombing

FROM RAY KENNEDY
IN JOHANNESBURG

A CHRISTMAS EVE bomb attack on a supermarket in a quiet South African town killed three people, two of them children, and left 56 injured.

It was the first such outrage since a series of bombings in town centres by white right-wing extremists before democratic elections in 1994.

Two crude pipe bombs, packed with explosives and jagged metal to inflict maximum casualties, went off without warning within five minutes of each other at lunchtime in a busy shopping area at Worcester, 60 miles from Cape Town.

The first, concealed in a concrete rubbish bin, exploded near the crowded supermarket entrance where most of the casualties occurred. The second, in a plastic container on a pavement, went off outside a chemist's shop about 75 yards away. Three black men were seen speeding away from the scene in a car.

Political leaders expressed outrage over the attack as President Mandela hosted a party for hundreds of children at his residence in Pretoria. F. W. de Klerk, the National Party leader, said he hoped that South Africa was not returning to the level of violence that existed in the country during the final months of his Government before the 1994 voting.

In KwaZulu/Natal, police said yesterday that five people, including a five-year-old child, were murdered overnight.

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Magnet
Food for thought

US condemns Serbian President for provoking street battles

FROM IAN BRODIE
IN WASHINGTON

THE United States condemned President Milosevic of Serbia for organising and inciting protesters who clashed violently with opponents of his Government in central Belgrade.

Undaunted by police beatings, enemies of Mr Milosevic took to the icy streets again yesterday. They took brooms, brushes and detergent to the site of his supporters' gathering to "decontaminate" the streets. There was no sign,

however, of the previous day's massive presence of riot police or pro-government workers that had abruptly intensified Serbia's political crisis after four weeks of peaceful demonstrations.

The accusation that Mr Milosevic and his Socialist Government were responsible for the street battles was made by Strobe Talbott, the Deputy Secretary of State and a close confidant of President Clinton's since their days together at Oxford.

"The Serbian authorities have flagrantly and provocatively cho-

sen to heighten tensions by bringing thousands of people into Belgrade to confront peaceful demonstrations by the Opposition," he said.

Mr Talbott repeated the warning first made two weeks ago by Warren Christopher, the Secretary of State, that Serbia could face a renewal of economic sanctions.

They were lifted earlier this year in recognition of Mr Milosevic's support in drawing up the Dayton accords that led to an uneasy peace

American reaction have been provoked by Mr Milosevic's announcement of results from municipal elections last month in which opposition parties won in 15 of 18 cities, including Belgrade, the capital. The United States reiterated demands that Mr Milosevic respect the election results, negotiate with the Opposition and reopen two popular radio stations that he closed down.

Washington's criticism was echoed in Paris and Bonn where Klaus Kinkel, the German Foreign Minister, gave a warning that any

further violence would damage Serbia's efforts to re-integrate with Europe.

Mr Milosevic gave no hint, however, of yielding to outside pressure during a rare public appearance on Christmas Eve to address about 50,000 supporters, described by the State Department as "rent-a-crowd". He denounced the opposition leaders as foreign lackeys. "Strong Serbia is not to the liking of some powers abroad and that's why they're trying to break it up with the help of domestic traitors," he said.

The Milosevic supporters were brought in from outlying areas, but the endeavour may have been counter-productive. The busloads of villagers, having received the news only from Serbia's sanitised state-run television, were astonished to find about 300,000 opposition supporters gathered to march through Belgrade.

Although opposition leaders had appealed for calm, about 10,000 supporters broke away from the main march and moved towards the cordon of heavily armed police who fired teargas,

clubbed demonstrators and waded in to separate the factions. Belgrade's emergency clinic treated 58 people for injuries. Five went to hospital, including one man who remained in a critical condition after being shot in the head by a Socialist.

Opposition leaders said more large protests are planned. They are also hoping that a fact-finding mission from the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe will soon deliver a verdict in their favour on the November 17 elections.

Three killed in church suicide bombing

By ROGER BOYES

AN APPARENTLY deranged German woman has killed herself and at least two worshippers in a suicide bombing at a small, crowded Christmas Eve midnight service.

Yesterday morning forensic scientists were carrying human remains out of the white stone Protestant church in Sindlingen, on the fringes of Frankfurt's financial centre. The explosion ripped a hole not only in the church — the shattered wooden pews gave a hint of the force of the blast in the enclosed space — but also in the country's festive season. "Why at Christmas? Why in a church? And who is this woman?" asked a Berlin radio commentator, echoing questions posed around the country.

The woman, who was not known to the 70 other worshippers, positioned herself in one of the pews. She attracted notice only because she was still wearing a tape while other worshippers had removed their outdoor garments.

Minutes after church bells had finished tolling for the midnight service, the woman detonated at least two grenades strapped to her abdomen. The blast immediately killed two sisters, aged 59 and 61, sitting on the same line of pews. Bits of bodies flew everywhere. Yesterday shards of bone were still being dug out of the church wall. The decapitated head of the woman — evidently in her 30s — has been recovered.

Ten parishioners were taken to hospital. Some, including a 12-year-old girl, were said to be in a serious condition.

The explosion chiefly hit the back of the church. A Christmas tree next to the altar where some of the wounded were given first aid — was left



Police sift through the wreckage for evidence yesterday after the bombing in the Sindlingen church

Moroccans risk all for life in Europe

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN MARRAKESH

WIRY, unshaven and blessed with a quick intelligence, Abdellah Ghezali has one aim, which he shares with thousands of his compatriots throughout Morocco. He wants to live and work in Europe.

Part of a stifling phenomenon that has made Morocco's young men one of the country's key illegal exports, Mr Ghezali, 23, is determined to cross the Strait of Gibraltar next summer. He has not had "a proper job" since he left school at 14, and the pull of Europe seems impossible to resist.

Spain is only 12 miles away, within reach for those prepared to travel at night in flimsy plywood boats. Even in December, when the weather is bleak, scores are detained every week by the maritime service of the Spanish Civil Guard.

Last summer, when Moroccans tried to reach Europe in unprecedented numbers, more than 50 were apprehended

each day. About 1,300 were detained in June alone.

Sipping mint tea in a café in Marrakesh's open-air market square, Mr Ghezali explained why he, too, had decided that he would also try to leave Morocco. "Look, this place is stagnant. Either I hustle tourists, sing sad ballads, and turn cartwheels for the crowds, or I starve."

Mr Ghezali's choice of word, "stagnant", starting in someone with so little formal education, sums up Morocco's problems and its charms. Western visitors are especially drawn to the country's unchanged ways. Yet it is this apparent absence of change which so stifies young Moroccans like Mr Ghezali.

Fifty-one per cent of the country's people are illiterate, and unemployment stands at 20 per cent, although for those under 20 the total is more than twice that figure. Per capita income in Morocco, North Africa's poorest country, is \$1,300 (£800) a year.

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Fifteen die as bus overturns

Dubai: Six women and nine children were killed and 38 other passengers were injured early yesterday when a bus ran off the road in Saudi Arabia and overturned. A traffic official said the victims were Saudis, Palestinians and Jordanians. The accident occurred near the northern city of Arar as the bus crossed the border from Jordan.

In Amman, a Jordanian official said 13 Jordanians were killed and 23 were injured in the crash. The official Petra state news agency said Crown Prince Hassan had ordered two military helicopters to transport the injured Jordanians for treatment in the capital's specialised Hussein Medical Centre. (Reuters)

Firms pay for pollution

Tokyo: Fourteen Japanese companies agreed to pay 3.1 billion yen (£16 million) to 438 people who complained of illnesses from air pollution. The decision ended a 14-year dispute. An official of NKK Corp, one of the world's five largest steelmakers, said the group accepted an out-of-court settlement recommended by courts, considering the age of the plaintiffs. They had blamed the pollution on plants in the original plaintiffs, 138 have died, including some from illnesses attributed to air pollution. (AP)

Soldier kills five comrades

Srinagar: An Indian soldier shot dead five comrades, including two officers, and wounded seven. The soldier, from the Rashtriya Rifles in Sopore, Jammu and Kashmir state, "ran amok and fired indiscriminately at his colleagues before he was overpowered", an army spokesman said. The regiment is the counter-insurgency wing of the army, which is engaged in controlling a separatist rebellion by Muslim guerrillas in Kashmir. The spokesman said the soldier appeared to be homesick. (Reuters)

Alert as cheese goes off

Paris: An airline steward who liked ripe French cheeses but could not stand their smell in his hotel room caused a bomb scare in Paris. The steward, who was in the city on a stopover, had placed the cheeses in a box on the windowsill. But hotel staff, alert for bombs after four people were killed and dozens wounded in a suspected Islamic fundamentalist attack on a Paris commuter train this month, spotted the box and called police. They pronounced the package tasty, but harmless. (Reuters)

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Dr Thomas Stuttaford on the benefits of regular exercise, the origins of anaesthesia and how too much drink can affect the feet

Celebrate the men who first mastered pain

The hospital wards have been emptied of all of those who are fit enough to go home for Christmas, but will start to fill up again tomorrow. Patients who are being admitted for routine surgery should go down on their knees in thankfulness to doctors who worked over Christmas 150 years ago, when the first anaesthetics were used in Britain.

On December 19, 1846, a dental surgeon, James Robinson, gave a Miss Lonsdale an anaesthetic with ether for removing her tooth. Miss Lonsdale felt nothing, woke up none the worse for her experience. The doctors were not to be outdone. Two days later Robert Liston, a famous surgeon in his day, amputated the leg of Frederick Churchill at University College Hospital. William Squire, a medical student, administered the ether. Mr Churchill did not experience any pain.

Previously Mr Liston had had to rely upon his skill at being able to wield the scalpel and saw very rapidly to save his patients the agony of a prolonged operation. He was able to amputate a leg, tie off

the arteries to stop bleeding, and stitch the skin back over the stump within 28 seconds. Even so, many patients fainted from the pain, and there was an appreciable mortality.

Fainting was always a merciful relief to the rest of the ward. In 1846, operations at University College Hospital took place behind the normal bed screens and the shouts of the victim were an uncomfortable reminder to those who had already had their operation, and a terrible portent for those who were waiting.

Before the development of anaesthesia very few operations were possible. The 28-second lower limb amputation was just bearable if the patient had a strong constitution, but the concept of doing more than superficial surgery was unthinkable. Once cancers started to fungate (break down, ooze and bleed), they were removed even before an anaesthesia had been introduced, but contemporary accounts describe the agony patients had to suffer. The only other internal surgery regularly undertaken was that

for the removal of bladder stones.

Advances in surgery which have revolutionised medicine in the past 150 years were possible only because of the

ever-increasing skill of anaesthetists. The more specialised anaesthesia has become, the greater the scope surgeons have had to explore the cavities of the bodies — the

abdomen, the thorax and the skull — which have hitherto been beyond their reach.

The news of the two operations done in the Christmas week of 1846 quickly spread to the great surgical centres of Britain. Within months every large city hospital was giving anaesthetics before surgery.

Chloroform was introduced in 1847, and 30 years later cocaine was first used as a local anaesthetic. Since then the art of anaesthesia has become very sophisticated and today anaesthetists run acute and chronic pain management teams, they control intensive-care units, they co-ordinate resuscitation services and still provide safe anaesthesia so

that surgeons may do their operations — obstetricians can deliver babies and physicians may undertake invasive investigations.

It is now possible for a woman to have a baby so that her delivery is painless. A well-delivered epidural block provides complete anaesthesia, and yet the patient remains mobile. Recently a patient decided during the second stage of her labour that her husband was looking a bit tired. She had been up since 4am and it was now supper time. Anxious to keep him cheerful, she leapt from the labour ward bed to make him a cup of tea. Bed

anaesthesia given during obstetrics is only one of the branches of the discipline that is constantly improving.

James Paget, a legendary surgeon, lived near St Bartholomew's Hospital in the 1840s in order to be close to the wards. His wife was not happy with this arrangement, as the screams of the patients on operating days upset her. But she was able to line her windows so that when closed they kept out the cries.

After the introduction of anaesthesia, Mrs Paget launched a campaign for December 19 to be a perpetual Bank Holiday so that the advantages which anaesthesia offers can never be forgotten.

Aids has compared the incidence of sexually transmitted genital sores of varying types in circumcised and non-circumcised tribesmen in Kenya. If tribesmen lived similar lives the number of cases of genital ulcers was 40 per cent lower in those men who had been circumcised.

These statistics confirm that circumcision offers some protection against venereal diseases.

Riding to hounds with the Queen's Hunt at Melton Mowbray: brisk exercise can be good for you — but people with heart trouble should take care



How to stay as fit as a horse

individual who drives everywhere and lounges indoors whenever possible. Only when someone takes violent exercise three times a week or more often is there any apparent advantage.

However, there is no better way of reducing the possibility of coronary heart disease than by taking regular steady exercise, preferably daily. And there is no better time to start putting good resolutions into practice than Boxing Day.

Brisk exercise can be defined as the amount that is needed to induce enough breathlessness to make conversation slightly difficult without it in any way preventing you from talking if you need to.

Ideally, everybody should aim to have 20 to 30-minutes brisk walk a day. The very term 'brisk' daily exercise sounds difficult, boring and even self-consciously worthy. But it can easily be achieved by parking the car slightly farther from the office and then walking; by buying the evening paper from a shop 15 minutes' walk from the house; by taking the dog for its daily exercise or even by seeking reward for a hard day's work by enjoying a glass of red wine, another cardio-protective measure, at a hostelry about a mile walk away.

Almost everybody, even those who know that they have heart disease, will benefit from a brisk daily walk.

but in the case of anyone who knows that their circulation is no longer pristine the exercise should be taken only when the weather is mild. If it is freezing and there is a howling gale blowing, it is safer to take a taxi.

Likewise, patients with known cardiovascular disease should avoid any exercise which makes them grunt, whether the exertion is being spent changing a car wheel, lifting a heavy weight or doing press-ups as part of a morning workout.

A question frequently asked by those who have had heart attacks is whether the exertion of sexual intercourse is safe. The general view, supported by statistics, is that making love is unlikely to lead to heart problems provided that the partner is a regular one, and that there has been a reasonable lapse of time after the last heavy meal.

It is wise to go straight from the table to the bed. One word of caution: brisk exercise taken late at night tends to induce insomnia, rather than produce a drowsy sleepiness.

Revellers' revenge

AFTER the celebrations of the past few days a few revellers will have experienced for the first time a painful swollen joint — and the realisation that they may have gout.

Characteristically, it is the big toe joint which is affected, but any joint can be involved. A gouty joint is not always red, tense and agonisingly painful — some patients may suffer no more than early-morning twinges in their feet as they walk.

Provided that the sufferer is not an excessively heavy drinker, gout usually responds to treatment with the drug allopurinol.

One type of gout — saturnine gout — is more serious, and in the past occasionally followed lead poisoning. Old-fashioned lead seals over the corks in a bottle could leave a deposit of lead around the bottle neck which could then be washed into the glass.

Snip that protects

THE next church festival after Christmas is not a celebration of the new year but of the circumcision of Christ, which coincides with it. It is a pity that more is not made of the occasion, for few surgical procedures are the subject of more misunderstanding.

In many parts of the world the practice has become the victim of politically correct medical thinking at a time when it is able to offer greater advantages than ever before.

Apparent reductions in the instance of sexually transmitted diseases in circumcised men in the Western world have in the past always been attributed — sometimes not on very good evidence — to a class bias. Recently the *International Journal of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and*



Circumcision: unfashionable

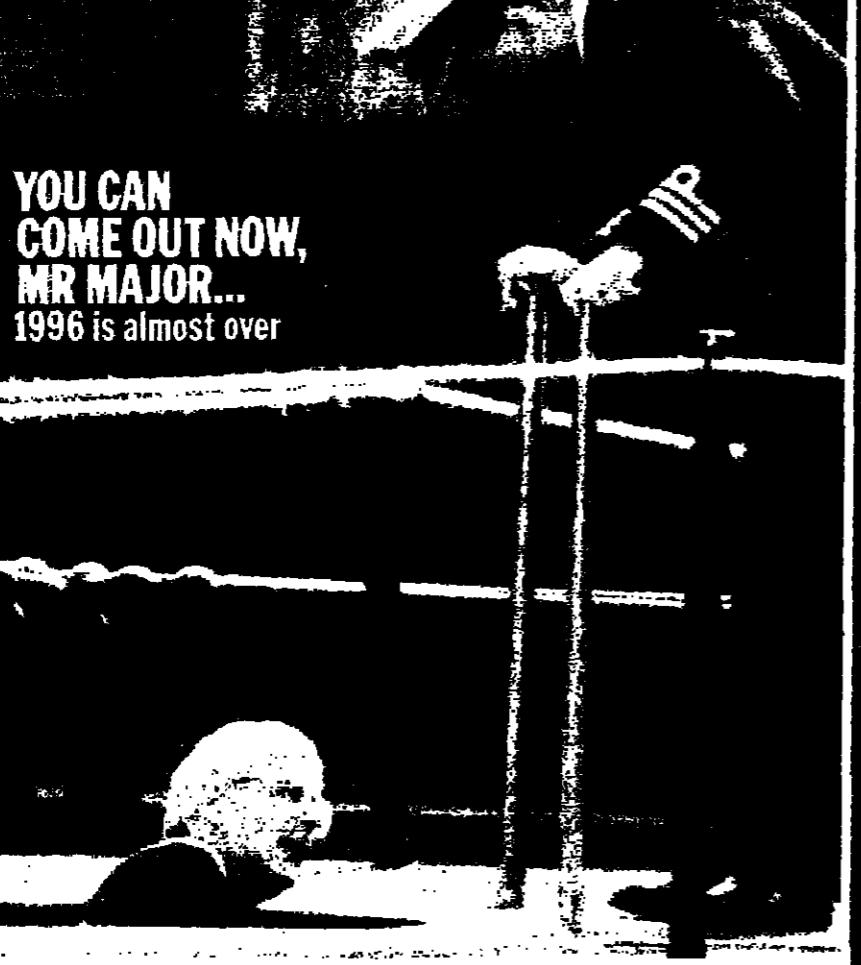
Aids has compared the incidence of sexually transmitted genital sores of varying types in circumcised and non-circumcised tribesmen in Kenya.

If tribesmen lived similar lives the number of cases of genital ulcers was 40 per cent lower in those men who had been circumcised.

These statistics confirm that circumcision offers some protection against venereal diseases.

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Irrelevant academic qualifications are an insult to nurses — and useless to their patients

In these short, cold days and long, cold nights, more people get ill and more of those get admitted to hospital. So it isn't surprising that the shortage of nurses is perceived a little more acutely than at other times of the year. Suddenly, everyone's getting frightened. But the lack of nurses, which anyway registers rather more as yet in the training colleges than in the wards, has nothing to do with excessive demand. Or at least not from the patients. The trouble, as any student nurse knows, lies rather in the Government's ludicrous requirements.

In the public mind there has been a dim awareness that for some time there have been not enough people who want to be nurses. We seek, reasonably enough I suppose, a financial explanation. Everyone knows that nurses don't get paid enough, so why look any further for something that would justify the shortfall of willing students? After all, the spirit of the age hardly embraces the vocational selflessness that earlier produced generations of hard-working, ill-paid nurses.

But I'm not sure that is the case. Yes, I know that whenever teenage girls are interviewed about why they wouldn't want to be nurses they automatically respond that the pay's no good and the hours are too long. Obviously, poor conditions are a factor. But what is really keeping students out of nursing colleges is something called Project 2000. This is the plan to make nursing training more academic and theory-based. And, frankly, can anything be more idiotic than that?

So what happens? The basic requirements for entry for what is now a diploma course are far more stringent than they used to be. On average, applicants are required to have five or six GCSEs at grade C or above; there is talk of demanding an A-level pass, too. This might sound reasonable enough. Six GCSEs hardly sounds like a mammoth intellectual demand, I do see. But think of what is required of a nurse of what you would want from a nurse were you in hospital, and I bet the ability to pass exams would not be on your list.

It is truly the mark of an intellectually fading society to place so much misguided emphasis on academic qualifications. All it does is produce great numbers of people striving for mediocrity. I know that the Government thought it was doing a good deal for nurses, flattering them by telling them that theirs was a demanding, valuable career. Well, it is, but not in the way the diploma course is making it. The sort of people who are natural nurses are put off, or are now considered ineligible, before they can be given a chance. And there is a huge dropout rate among those who do start their training — simply because the qualities that make people good nurses are not the same qualities that make people good at passing exams.

But there is scarcely less work involved now in training to be a nurse than in following a degree course. It's no wonder that prospective students feel that if they're going to have to slog over their books for three years, they may as well do a degree and try to get a better-paid job. Apparently, interested bodies are considering upgrading the current diploma course to a full degree, as if that could possibly be the answer. This is a move in the wrong direction: the course is not practically enough based as it is. Student nurses need to be in hospitals, not classrooms.

It is not just that the sort of people who would make the best nurses can't cope with the academic expectations made of them, but that it is making

the senior nurses who have to deal with them once they qualify pretty fed up, too. Because what we end up with are supposedly-trained nurses who don't know the first thing about what they need to do as a nurse. All the assignments they are given as part of their training — health promotion in the community, how research influences drug prescribing and so on — are of help then.

What they are expected to study during the course is, as student nurses have complained to me, research. They read papers and papers and have to learn about what the research says, how it leads to which findings and why, and then the students end up on the wards and don't know how to give an injection or take someone's blood pressure.

And it isn't flattering to nurses, it's insulting. Nursing is an honourable, worthy job: pretending it needs academic status to give it respectability is blunderingly offensive — and silly. But it goes along with the phoney titles and pretensions of modern disciplines. It is sadly to the point that when Radio 4's PM programme did a story on the shortage of nurses the other day, the snippet of nurses' training they carried was a recording from a lecture on "the philosophy of nursing". Just as long as the nurse who looks after me when I'm next in hospital hasn't been majoring on that one...

Now, I know it is the case that nursing can entail duties that require advanced medical techniques. I still hold, however, that the ability to perform them doesn't rest on intellectual ability exactly. But what I do see is that nursing has a variety of requirements: that it isn't just one job. So don't offer just one — the most demanding — sort of training.

It is all part of this ridiculous modern myth that everyone has the same abilities, that we should all be able to do the same work. In the old days it was understood that there were gradations of ability and that appropriate work could be found.

People who wanted to go into nursing could train either to be an SEN, which required little in the way of academic application, or an SNR. In an occupation like nursing you do need a large infantry. Why deprecate that? What is certainly important is that there should be mobility within the profession. That can be attended to. But what is idiotic is to put those who could be good nurses off at the very beginning, or rather before they even start. In an age of great unemployment it is madness for there to be a shortage of nurses.

What it all points to is the great gap in our education system. We are used to discussing the poor academic standards, but that is nothing in comparison with the poor non-academic standards. People who have any number of practical abilities and skills are merely made to feel bad for not being exam fodder. Once the school-leaving age was raised to 16 that was always going to be a problem, and unemployment figures are what they are, no government will ever want to see the school-leaving age lowered.

I passionately agree that it is important that as many schoolchildren as possible can do as well as they can, but believing that the only training that will equip them to understand or survive in the world is academic is utterly foolish. We are training entire generations to be disappointed in themselves and in the world. And we will soon

have no one ready or willing to do the jobs at which any number of shiny, qualified university graduates would be absolutely hopeless.

Nigella Lawson

Is it the end for nurses?



Practical nursing: a nurse needs hands-on experience like this, not a string of GCSEs and a qualification in health promotion in the community

'Being a Freud has its problems, it tends to detain you'

I'd rather not talk about my family," announces the young, pale-skinned 27-year-old in the grey wool outfit. Lowering her eyes to brush a stray thread from her knee, the words rush out as though she has prepared them but is unsure whether she has the nerve to deliver them.

Susie Boyt's family are the Freuds, the talented tribe that peoples the spectrum of creative careers in literature, fashion design, television, art and public relations.

Given Susie's reticence, it's odd that her publisher had sent me masses of gossipy cuttings on the life of her father, Lucian Freud, arguably Britain's greatest living figurative painter. His background is splashed with exuberant brushes of rakish bohemianism and splattered with lovers, wives and children.

"Yeuk," murmured Susie when I tell her. Neither rakish nor bohemian are words appropriate to the youngest child of the painter and one of his mistresses, Suzy Boyt.

Susie, who has just published her second novel, pre-

sumably wishes applause for her own literary accomplishments. Emotionally robust, with strong new skin grown through what she calls "bad patches where I tended to overeat, culminating in a mid-life crisis when I was 21", she says she has turned her life around to the way she wants it. "At the moment, it seems as though everything has come together, which is why I wanted to show in my second novel that you don't have to go through life really depressed."

"I want people to feel ambitious for their lives, not feel it's something they have to struggle on through. I've always wanted to write, always been one of those anecdotal people viewing life through a series of stories."

"Even if I hadn't been published I would still write. I had already steered myself to a succession of rejection slips, believing that if your writing is good then it'll keep until it is discovered. I wrote my novels in the morning, keeping my afternoons free for various part-time jobs. I've worked in a literary agent's office, in a bookshop, typed for people,

with another much older man, her tutor. The heroine, Nell, psychologically damaged by her father's attitude, lists in a notebook the grievances she has harboured against him. Unable to bring herself to talk in any depth of her own father and their relationship, Susie opts for airy evasiveness.

"We're quite close now though I didn't see a lot of my father when growing up, but my mother was marvellous at creating a home. She is an

artist, but she stopped painting for 20 years to bring up us five children. She sold lace in an antique shop. I'm very proud of her and glad she kept her own name. Being a Freud has its problems. Tends to detain you."

Unravelling the strands of Lucian Freud's family takes patience. Two wives — Kitty, daughter of Jacob Epstein, and Lady Caroline Blackwood — preceded the households of mistresses Suzy Boyt and

Bernadine Coverly, a teacher. With Suzy there were five children: Alexander, Isabel, Kai, Rose and Susie. Bernadine had two daughters: Bella and Esther.

"We're very close, my family. Both my parents were so excited about my first book. My father phoned up after the first page, raving about it, and kept phoning every couple of pages, making a fuss. I'm very lucky in having such a supportive family."

"Esther organised the writing workshop where I read my pieces. Bella made the coat I wore to my launch party. Rose, who is also a novelist, did the book jacket photo."

"When I was growing up Rose was the main person in my life, although sometimes I think I brought myself up. I was one of those very studious children, one who relished her three hours a night homework. At times, I wonder what it would have been like to have had completely different parents, to have lived in a house with roses round the door. When you come from a background like mine, one that's a bit wild, there is a certain comfort and glamour in ordinary, everyday things."

"Thrusting forward her left hand in reply to questions about her own romantic史上, she cries: "Look, I'm engaged." Gazing down at the impressive row of diamonds, she says: "A real Christmas cracker of a ring isn't it?"

"Tom, I'd rather not say too much about him, runs a recording studio. Being engaged is lovely, and is, I think, a very important part of being

married, a prelude to something that is going to last forever. Marriage and children is something I would take more seriously than anything else in my life. I see my life as being one I have created for myself. Yes, I have been in therapy, although I wouldn't want to go into that. Let's just say I've succeeded in sorting out certain difficulties."

Perhaps writing about them helps. The father and daughter theme in her novels is becoming a familiar refrain. Then again, she has a father who has proved a source of enduring fascination for many women long after disappearing from their lives.

At the age of 74, he remains an elegant figure about town, often accompanied by a fresh beauty. The supply appears endless despite his age and a ghostly pallor, resembling a character from a Gothic novel.

I suggest he looks like an ogre. "No, he isn't," says Susie. "and he's not at all frightening. I admire him, the way he has led his life, the rules he has chosen to live by."

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Dunblane: time to let go and live

Magnus Linklater urges the bereaved to move on and rejoin the community

I found it hard yesterday not to think of Mick North in his bleak little sitting-room, a dark place in the centre of Dunblane, looking out onto a narrow street near the railway station. I talked to him there a few weeks ago about his daughter Sophie, who was killed by Thomas Hamilton at the primary school on March 13. There were mementoes of her on the walls and the room seemed to have remained untouched since her death. Dr North, a widower, knew that Christmas was going to be tough without her and was not quite certain how he was going to be able to cope with it. I hope it was not as wrenching for him as he feared it might be.

We are not, as a nation, good at coping with grief. We tend to bottle it up in ourselves and retreat from it in others, especially if it is too publicly on display. I remember the shock that went through a congregation in a Kensington church some years ago, when, in the course of a funeral service for a greatly respected Pakistani journalist, his widow suddenly rushed over to his coffin and huddled herself on it, sobbing uncontrollably. This was real mourning, which is what the service was meant to be about. Yet the rest of us, uncertain how to react, sank back into our pews and studied our shoes in silent embarrassment; I remember thinking that a stiff upper lip was a wholly inadequate response to human emotion. The traditional Scottish way of dealing with death used to be to share it with the whole community. The body of the deceased would be laid out in an upstairs room, and the bereaved wife or husband would sit beside it, acknowledging visitors and listening to their muted compliments. After the service, a wake would be held, often involving the consumption of large quantities of whisky. This allowed people to say what they really thought, to offer proper consolation, and to weep without inhibition if necessary. Usually, however, solemnity gave way to celebration and a good Highland wake would be talked of for weeks afterwards. This was a healthy catharsis — the acknowledgement of grief is the first step towards coming to terms with it.

The Dunblane parents did not, of course, have this option. The deaths of their children were so sudden, brutal and public that from the beginning their mourning was conducted in the spotlight of world attention. Drawn together by the trauma, they formed self-support groups which met regularly; they launched a high-profile campaign against handguns and backed initiatives to ensure that nobody should ever forget what had happened. All this was a way of coping with their grief, but it struck a ready chord in the media, coming as it did at a time of national anger about violence and amidst attempts to reassess social values. The parents

Death always leaves a gap and their loss, terrible as it had been, was not unique

were a touchstone for the moral climate of the times. Because they were mostly middle-class and articulate and rapidly became well practised in responding to events, there was no lack of coverage of their views.

At the same time, what began to emerge was an intolerance of tone and language that was faintly disturbing. Anyone who expressed the slightest doubt about their campaign on handguns was seen as in some way condoning violence. Politicians were judged on whether they demonstrated total endorsement of the parents' position, and the tabloid press routinely damned anyone who questioned their views. It began to seem at times as if they had a monopoly on grief.

It was perhaps inevitable that this should cause tensions in Dunblane itself. There were other inhabitants who had also suffered bereavements, more mundane perhaps, but no less painful. They coped with them as best they could, yet their suffering had to take second place to the suffering of the Dunblane parents. This came to a head over a small incident involving plans to erect a Christmas tree in the local burial ground as a memorial to the children. The cemetery belongs not just to the parents but to everyone whose relatives are buried there. Some of them felt that this was one gesture too far. They lodged protests with the council, which stopped in to forbid the tree. "This is the first time the parents have had to take no answer," said one councillor. "But a lot of people have lost loved ones this year, not just the families at the school ... people feel the parents have gone too far."

That hurt. Dr North, for one, felt that some sort of personal anger was being expressed against them and that it might even be prompted by envy of the publicity they attracted. They decided to withdraw the plans for the tree, but could not help questioning the motives of those who had opposed them. Had they turned against the very people who had suffered so traumatically? The truth was simpler, if harder for the parents to accept: whatever form death takes, it always leaves a gap and their loss, terrible as it had been, was not unique.

With Christmas now over, the time may have come for the Dunblane parents to follow others, to rejoin the community of which they are a part, and to allow the healing process to begin.

For an ordinary family, this is print. At any rate I do not see it in the bookshops.

Aubrey is one of the two or three most readable prose writers of the English 17th century. Indeed the only other author who is as easy and delightful is Samuel Pepys. Like all good gossip, Aubrey relished trivial or even ridiculous details about the lives of great men. "When Sir Christopher Wren was at Paris about 1671, he was ill and feverish, made but little water, and had a pain in his kidneys." He sent for a physician, who advised him to let blood, thinking he had a pleurisy. But bleeding much disagreed with his constitution, he would defer it a day longer. That night he dreamt that he was in a place where palm trees grew (suppose, Egypt) and that a woman in a romantic habit reached him dexterous.

He does not know whether the *Miscellanies*, which is equally enjoyable, is in print. At any rate I do not see it in the bookshops.

Aubrey jotted down other anecdotes about Sir Christopher Wren for the collection of biographical details which became his *Brief Lives*. Another of them seems quite modern. "It ought never to be forgotten, what our ingenious countryman Sir Christopher Wren proposed to the silk stocking weavers of London, viz a way to weave seven pair or nine pair of stockings at once (it must be an odd number). He demanded £400 for his invention; but the weavers refused it, because they were poor, and besides, they said it would spoil their trade; perhaps they did not consider the proverb that light gains with quick returns make heavy

purses. Sir Christopher was so noble, seeing they would not adventure so much money, that he breaks the model of the engine all to pieces before their faces." This is only a brief anecdote, but it foreshadows the economic arguments of the Industrial Revolution, a generation before it began.

Aubrey's interest in the paranormal led him to record many other stories that are still intriguing. John Donne, the poet and Dean of St Paul's, went on a mission to Paris in one of the very early years of the 17th century. His wife, who was pregnant, was reluctant about his going; he demanded not to do so, but was persuaded by Sir Robert Drury, his patron. While he was in Paris, he had a psychic experience. Aubrey states that Donne told Sir Robert: "I have seen a dreadful vision since I saw

you: I have seen my dear wife pass twice by me through this room with her hair hanging about her shoulders, and a dead child in her arms." Sir Robert told him he had been dreaming, but as Donne persisted in his belief that he had indeed seen a vision, sent a messenger to London to find out how Anne Donne was. The messenger returned to say: "He found and left Mrs Donne very sick, in bed, and that, after a long and dangerous labour, she had been delivered of a dead child." When the late 19th-century Cambridge psychological researchers came to catalogue the sightings of ghosts, they found that similar reports of phantoms of the living were not uncommon.

Aubrey also records phantoms of the dying or recently dead. "In James Street in Covent Garden did then lodge a gentlewoman, a hand-

some woman but common, who was Mr Mohun's sweetheart. Mr Mohun was murdered [at Ebury Farm] about 10 in the morning; and at that very time, his mistress being in bed, saw Mr Mohun come to her bedside, draw the curtain, look upon her and go away. She called after him, but no answer. She knocked for Mr Mohun; she said she did not see him, and had the key of her chamber door in her pocket."

No doubt any author who becomes interested in parapsychology will sometimes prove credulous; one has only to think of Conan Doyle and the forged photographs of fairies. Yet Aubrey's combination of an interest in all the quirks of human psychology with a belief in the paranormal makes him hard to put down. There is also the style. If one reads the brief sentence which starts the Mohun story from "In James Street" to "sweetheart", one has the opening of a perfect storyteller. Has the word "sweetheart" ever been better placed to heighten the ending of a simple sentence?

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His great virtue for us, which he shares with Samuel Pepys, is that he talks our language. When one compares him to John Milton, who was only 16 years older, one can relate to Aubrey as though he were a contemporary. Milton is far less accessible to the modern imagination. Who would not love the man who could write this paragraph: "Arise Evans had a fungous nose, and said it was revealed to him, that the King's hand would cure him; and at the first coming of King Charles II into St James's Park he kissed the King's hand and rubbed his nose with it, which disturbed the King, but cured him. Mr Ashmole told it me."

Pudding's off

HELP OF a sort is at hand for those corpulent souls who overdid their Christmas stuffing. After the terrifying success of Lord Lawson's *Blaby's diet* and the follow-up book, his wife Therese is being pursued to write her side of the story: a cookery book for weight-watchers.

Should you wish to take up its

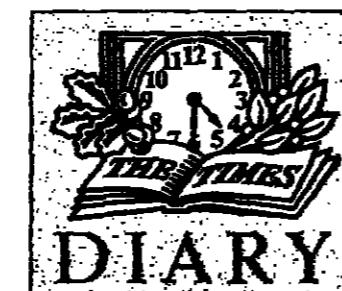
recipes and take on the appearance of "lanky" Lawson, a less cuddly soul than the wholesome Chancellor we knew of old, there will have to be sacrifices.

Therese said on Christmas Eve:

"I am thinking about writing a cookbook — it's just that I have a good deal of other recipes. I do not think that I could cook anything other than a low-fat way. I could not cook nursery suet puddings, for instance. We're having a low-fat turkey cooked in sesame oil. There is Christmas pudding but we also have a nice low-fat truly alternative."

However, for those for whom Christmas is unthinkable without at least one mouthful of sin, there is solace. Lord Lawson is allowed to indulge his passion for Stilton, a favourite banned when he first started his regime but permissible on the maintenance diet. Think of him glancing forlornly at the butter dish, however. Therese has banned him from approaching it.

After months of unemployment, an actor friend suddenly found



himself with a job. Several auditions had resulted in him being cast as a mugger for one of the BBC's reconstructions on Crimewatch. For days there was fizzy wine and celebration all round as he and his friends toasted his sudden rise from the couch. A few days later, however, he was found slumped in the corner of a pub, a cigarette drooping sadly from his mouth. "What's wrong? Didn't you go on Crimewatch?" he was asked. "No," he said bitterly. "They caught the so-and-so."

Stoned

SUCKING up to the Pope simply does not work, as the Freemasons have just discovered. They offered

him their Order of Galilee award for his "continual and meritorious" work towards international understanding and friendship. He told them where to go. At the back of his mind was doubtless the series of events in the late 1970s and early 1980s when the Vatican was found to be intimately involved with the sinister P2 Masonic lodge in Italy and the financial scandals surrounding the collapse of Banco Ambrosiano.

The Pope does not as a rule accept honours and prizes," said the Vatican. That Roman Catholics are banned from joining the Masons — whom they regard as a weird secret society — did not help, either.

Short fuse

PHYSICISTS at New College in Oxford have been applying themselves to some advanced electrical engineering, courtesy of the ancient circuitry in their rooms. It was installed some years ago by a bursar who was anxious to cut down on heating bills in the fellows' rooms. Dr Joshua Silver, an atomic physicist at the college, explains the difficulty in layman's terms: "The rooms are fitted with a restrictor which means the system overloads

if you plug in more than one electric fire." When Silver tried offering his entrance candidates a cup of tea at interviews earlier this year, the result was chaos, since boiling a kettle trips the fuses unless the electric fire is turned off in advance.

"I spent half the interviews on a rickety chair fiddling with the fusebox," says Silver. "It was a good test for the candidates. It didn't take the sharper ones long to work out that it was a straight



choice between the fire and the kettle."

• Bar wit from PHS's favourite wig, Judge Barrington Black. Sitting in Harrow Crown Court the other day, he was confronted by a man who pleaded guilty to two charges of robbery. After his first offence, he had been granted bail by the magistrates. Unluckily for him, however, two days later he burgled again and dropped his bail form, complete with his name and address, at the crime scene. Jailing him for four years, Judge Black said: "It would save the courts a awful lot of time if every defendant left his visiting card."

Off the road

THERE is increasing concern among ponytails at the record company Polygram over the future of Paula Yates' band, the singer Michael Hutchence, who is soon to appear in court facing charges of opium possession. If found guilty, he will not be able to go on a planned tour of America to promote his new record.

According to sources within the company, Hutchence and his band, INXS, were paid several millions in

age of Art centenary exhibition this year, and others are bound to follow.

Foreign perceptions of Korea have always lagged behind the reality. Because the Koreans are still modest in the geopolitical and diplomatic postures they adopt, the world has tended to underestimate their increasing power. But this month Korea gained two significant new labels. It became the world's eleventh largest economy and it became a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Membership of this club of rich nations will probably bring improved access to overseas markets and better credit ratings for overseas loans, as well as new confidence.

Despite their modest but growing influence over our lives, much about Korean society and institutions remains unknown, hidden behind screens of misunderstanding and cliché. All foreign cultures seem paradoxical at first sight. But there are now more than 15,000 Korean residents in this country and growing numbers of visitors — since the ban on overseas travel was lifted after the 1988 Seoul Olympics, the number of Korean visitors to Britain has risen from 14,348 in 1989 to 54,206 for the first six months of this year — so we should have the chance to unravel some of the paradoxes and learn about Korea. And the *kimchi* is actually not too bad in small quantities after dark and a stiff drink. But for true cultural understanding, try the *gopechang bokum* — "special cow dish with intestine sauce".

some woman but common, who was Mr Mohun's sweetheart. Mr Mohun was murdered [at Ebury Farm] about 10 in the morning; and at that very time, his mistress being in bed, saw Mr Mohun come to her bedside, draw the curtain, look upon her and go away. She called after him, but no answer. She knocked for Mr Mohun; she said she did not see him, and had the key of her chamber door in her pocket."

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Hutchence with Yates



No pud: the slimline Lawsons

P.H.S



BETWEEN FOX AND HOUND

A modest proposal for compromise in the countryside

Boxing Day, as much as Christmas, depends upon traditions for its charm. The football derby and the charitable visit are uncontrollable complements to the spiritual and sensual pleasures of Christmas Day itself. But one of the most vivid of today's traditions could be extinguished by this time next year. At more than 200 places around the country this morning fox-hunters will gather for their traditional Boxing Day meets. If Labour wins the general election it is committed to a free vote on hunting with hounds and the Commons arithmetic in the event of a Labour victory would make a ban almost inevitable. The distaste may feel for a sport which they believe veils real cruelty with genteel civilities is understandable. Legislation to ban hunting is not, however, the most appropriate way to guarantee the welfare of the countryside.

Some defenders of country sports can alienate the detached observer with an enthusiasm for the chase which seems to verge on the ferocious. There are occasions where huntmen do not behave in a manner either wholly seemly or restrained and the use of terriers, in particular, requires careful policing. Outside traditional hunting areas public support for the sport is thin. A blanket ban, however, would be a clumsy gesture, however well-intentioned. It would deprive a significant section of the population of enjoyment and employment with no certainty of lessening any cruelty towards foxes.

Those with the best interests of the countryside at heart should be exploring how public concerns about hunting might be addressed without criminalising a peaceable minority. Progress of this kind has, unfortunately, been obstructed by the narrowness of the position adopted by some of the most vigorous opponents of hunting, not least the League against Cruel Sports. Four former

senior members of the league, including two past chairmen, recently left the organisation in despair at its inflexible attitude. They have established a new grouping, the Wildlife Network, designed to bring together those opposed to animal cruelty and keen to establish a reasonable dialogue with supporters of hunting.

The Wildlife Network believe that an end to traditional fox-hunting would ensure neither longer lives nor easier deaths for rural foxes. Farmers do not allow hunts over their land out of sentiment but because they want a predator who deprives them of livestock and income to be pursued. If hunting ends, then farmers will still want to protect their sheep and chickens.

Members of the Wildlife Network fear that without hunting, many farmers might be tempted into trying to control the fox population by shooting, snaring or illegal gassing. Hunting is a more humane method of controlling foxes, and it could be made more acceptable with effective regulation.

Hunters, aware of the level of opposition to their sport, should co-operate with those who wish to see it continue, but controlled.

The Countryside Movement, an all-party body chaired by Sir David Steel, is currently holding an inquiry into the ethics and effectiveness of fox-hunting and is due to report in March. It would be unwise to preempt all the report's recommendations, but the preparedness of the former and hunting activists of the Wildlife Network to concede the case for hunting's survival tallies with the conclusions of many independent figures who have examined the evidence. In a country increasingly estranged from its rural roots, an open mind and tolerant disposition towards the settled habits of the countryside are the least one should expect from enlightened legislators.

A VERY ENGLISH ROMAN

Two thousand years ago: Seneca the Younger was born in 3BC

Lucius Annaeus Seneca, the Younger, was born at Corduba, the modern Córdoba, in southern Spain 2000 years ago. That sentence might stand as a paradigm for an entry in a reference book. But what possible relevance can it have for a daily newspaper today? What is Seneca to us, or we to Seneca?

Even for classical scholars, Seneca comes from the silver not the golden age. His works are not mainstream. His grotesque and gory tragedies influenced the genre of blood-and-thunder melodrama, that is, still popular on the screen. But, compared with both life and entertainment in the late 20th century, they no longer seem as extravagant, shocking or incredible as they once did.

Seneca can be criticised for hypocrisy. He always has been. He was an original fat cat who preached the importance of wealth. He never gave up his own vast wealth until it was extracted from him. And he was also a versatile scribbler who served one of Rome's very worst tyrants.

The reason that Seneca is still relevant to politics today is because he was an early spin doctor lurking in the arras behind his ruler. He was an intellectual who adventured into politics in order to change the world. As Nero's "tutor", for a short period he became a master of the universe. He understood human nature in that harsh empire, and after Boadicea's rebellion persuaded his Emperor to adopt a policy of appeasement towards the British rather than reprisal. For a time he persuaded his golden boy to adopt humane manifestos and even decent policies. He wrote cautiously liberal speeches and soundbites for his master. His Stoic philosophy seemed so attractive that the Christians made up a legend that he knew St

Paul. But all political careers must come to dust. That gloomy axiom applies particularly to intellectuals who sleepwalk into politics, from Socrates and Francis Bacon to Adlai Stevenson and Keith Joseph.

In Seneca's case his defeat was, fittingly, a bloody tragedy. Tacitus gives a vivid account of how Seneca was ordered to open his veins, which bled inadequately because he was so old. His State suicide was historically modelled on that of Socrates. And he seems to have been at the very least a tolerable old Roman husband for his young wife followed suit. Tacitus found the whole business a bit too much, and preferred the sarcastic death of Petronius; raging against his demon Emperor.

Seneca was a bit of a fraud. He professed high moral standards while condoning (and even assisting) Nero's crimes, which included murder and matricide. He flattered those in power and was an expert at lobby intrigue and the old-boy-network. He was a high player in a regime that became monstrous. And he paid the price.

But Seneca's career was also an example of how the intellectual should engage in politics. For his teaching was more complex than it has been presented by angry puritans. He advocated giving honest advice to his masters while avoiding offence and provocation. He had a sympathy for underdogs and human weakness. He was aware of how hard it is to be good. He was not a model of virtue. But he was more honest about his failings than modern intellectuals and an encouragement to frail human beings. Let him stand for an early endearing example of British pragmatism in philosophy and politics. Politics still needs its intellectuals as well as its fixers.

NEPTUNE'S BIG SECRET

Man is a sucker for the unknown

Humanity's thirst to explore new worlds can blind it to the wonders of the old. The possibility of life on other planets has bewitched scientists this year, but almost more intriguing, and certainly worthier of study, are the mysterious life-forms which share our world but have, so far, eluded our attention. The most compelling of these creatures is the giant squid, a native of New Zealand which has never been seen alive but whose 60-foot long cadaver has been washed up on antipodean shores. The cephalopod's South Seas seclusion may end next year when an American expedition hopes to track it to its lair. With so much ingenuity having been spent on investigating life on the planet Mars it is reassuring to know that there is still an appetite for exploring life in the realm of Neptune.

Science knows little of the giant squid, *Architeuthis*. Its behaviour, breeding, feeding and swimming habits are a mystery. The scientist, Clyde Roper, who hopes to shine new light on the life of the reclusive mollusc believes he will encounter it hundreds of leagues under the sea but is unsure quite how low he will have to go before his camera lens encounters the foot-wide eyes of the *sepius octopus*.

Art, however, has rescued the giant squid from its hermitage and made it our familiar. The squid has been immortalised in ink. Old literary salts from Homer through Melville to the basking shark of the bestseller lists, Peter Benchley, have tantalised their readers

with tentacled Leviathans. Tennyson was captivated by the Kraken, a giant squid which rests on the ocean bottom until roused by the fires of hell, it rises to the surface and dies. The dweller "in the abyssal sea" with "unnumerable polypi" of which Tennyson wrote was a Nordic myth.

The Lincolnshire laureate was inspired by tales from Scandinavia. The first sighting of the Kraken was reported by the Swedish Bishop Olaf Magnus in 1555. The squid, like its briny cousin the siren, won its prey by deceit. Magnus described the Kraken's skin as soft as gravel on the seashore as to tempt men on to what they imagined to be an island. Then, as they roasted their victims on its back they, in turn, became supper to themselves. The Kraken could, however, like all creation, be tamed by divine intervention. In 1700 a Danish priest, Bartholomew, survived an hour on the Kraken's back by celebrating Mass.

The giant squid which inhabits the South Pacific appears, on the available evidence, to be altogether less aggressive than its mythical Norse relative. More preyed upon than preying, its beaks are regularly found in the stomachs of sperm whales. The pursuit of a sperm whale in *Moby Dick* provided the modern novel with its Grail quest and the search for the giant squid provides science at the end of the millennium with its most appropriate quarry—the pursuit of the last great living creature to evade man's eye.

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More likely is that he was rather a small man in a very large car and simply did not see it, whatever the views of the students afterwards.

Yours faithfully,
HEATHER EDWARDS,
Cardinal House,
The Green, Hampton Court, Surrey.

December 20.

Just a Christmas thought.

Yours sincerely,
ELIZABETH HOLT,
Orton Hall,
Wellington, Telford, Shropshire.

December 22.

Elizabeth Holt

Duke's right to speak on gun law

From Lord St John of Fawsley

Sir, Any encounter with Lord Wyatt of Ewford, either public or private, is an exhilarating and unpredictable experience. I little expected when we exchanged a few words on a television programme last week, that I would find myself in a starring role in Lord Wyatt's always stimulating reflections in *The Times* (article, December 24).

I am the last person to want to prolong this tiresome controversy, but Lord Wyatt has not got what I said or the constitutional implications of the matter quite right.

My view is that Prince Philip has an indefensible right to make his views known in any manner he pleases but that it would have been better on such a complex issue for them to have been set out in a measured speech in the House of Lords, of which he is a distinguished member, rather than in a dread soundbite which could be and was sensationalised and misrepresented.

Such a course would have been constitutionally correct. The convention is not as Lord Wyatt appears to think that Prince Philip should not speak on political questions, but that he should not take sides in matters of party politics. The gun-law debate is one in which the parties are in broad agreement and opinion is divided in a cross-bench way. It would thus be appropriate constitutionally for the Duke to set out the issue in a non-partisan way in the Lords.

Lord Wyatt thinks the Duke is freer to speak because he has not been granted the title of Prince Consort but this has nothing to do with the matter as that title is exclusively honorific and carries no constitutional implications.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,
ST JOHN OF FAWSLEY,
House of Lords.
December 24.

Divided parties

From Mr Julian Grainger

Sir, Robert Worcester of MORI (reports, December 13) repeats the assertion often made by political leaders and commentators that "Voters react strongly against divided parties".

His evidence is that of those questioned on the image of the parties two months ago: 43 per cent described the Conservatives as "divided" as compared with 14 per cent in September 1991. Similar polls have noted similar observations by the electorate.

The trouble is that none of the polls ever seems to test the importance of "division" by asking whether it actually matters to the average voter. In my experience as a political canvasser over many years, few (if any) people mention party divisions over issues such as law and order, taxes or Europe.

Party leaders do democracy a disservice by trying to preserve an artificial unity, if the result is an impression that politicians say one thing in public and another in private, then perhaps it is not surprising that the electorate hold them in such low esteem.

It is sometimes argued that Labour's heavy defeat in 1983 was due to their public divisions over disarmament. Perhaps it was actually the official policy of unilateralism that was unpopular. Similarly, perhaps the Conservatives' present problems stem from their official policy on Europe rather than "divisions".

Party unity is not credible in the eyes of many voters. Efforts by party leaders to stifle dissenting backbenchers who reflect genuine concerns may eventually prove counter-productive.

Yours faithfully,
JULIAN GRAINGER,
30 Homestead Road,
Chelsfield, Orpington, Kent.

December 14.

Mind over matter

From Mrs Heather Edwards

Sir, I find it extremely hard to believe that my late husband, Dr Harold Edwards, would have ever deliberately driven over a motorcycle parked in his parking space (letter, December 19). He had far too high a regard for the precision of machinery, including motorcycles, having owned one in his youth.

More likely is that he was rather a small man in a very large car and simply did not see it, whatever the views of the students afterwards.

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HEATHER EDWARDS,
Cardinal House,
The Green, Hampton Court, Surrey.

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Heather Edwards

Elizabeth Holt

Orton Hall

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December 22.

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COURT CIRCULAR

SANDRINGHAM
NORFOLK

December 24: The Hon Mary Morrison has succeeded the Lady Elton as Lady in Waiting to the Queen.

SANDRINGHAM
NORFOLK

December 25: Divine Service was held in Sandringham Parish Church this morning.

Birthdays today

Professor D.H. Barlow, obstetrician and gynaecologist, 47; Captain George W. Burnett, Lord-Lieutenant of Midlothian, 69; Professor Sir Colin Campbell, Vice-Chancellor, Nottingham University, 52; Sir Alastair Dunnett, former chairman, Thomson Scottish Petroleum, 88; Sir Christopher Hewett, former President Law Society, 67; Mr Rohan Kanhai, cricketer, 61; Mr Eric Kinder, chairman, Smith and Nephew, 69; Professor Alan King, clarinettist, 71; Miss Anne Lapaine, actress, 52; Mr David Perry, cricketer, 36; Weddington Sir Denis Quillley, actor, 66; Mr Mark Robson, MP, 50; Miss Anna Scher, founder, Anna Scher Theatre, 52.

Marriage

Mr T. Plumpton and Miss M.D. Clark. The marriage took place on Christmas Eve, at City Hall, New York, of Mr Terry Plumpton, only son of Mr and Mrs F.W. Plumpton, of Morden, Surrey, to Miss Melanie Dawn Clark, only daughter of the late G.L. Clark and Mrs M.J. Clark of Selsdon, Surrey. They were attended by their children, Ashley and Brook Plumpton.

Appointment

Sir William (Liam) McCollum, QC, 63, the most senior of the judges of the High Court of Northern Ireland, has been appointed a Lord Justice of Appeal in Northern Ireland from January 8. He succeeds Sir Robert Carswell, who is to become Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland on that day. The vacancy in the High Court will be filled in the new year.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Thomas Gray, poet, London, 1716; Lord George Gordon, Protestant agitator, London, 1751; Charles Babidge, pioneer of calculating machines, Totnes, 1792; Dion Boucicault, actor and dramatist, Dublin, 1822; Horatio Miller, novelist, New York, 1891; Mao Tse-tung, Chairman of the People's Republic of China 1949-59; Shaojun, Human Province, 1953; Victor Hely-Hutchinson, composer, Cape Town, 1901.

DEATHS: Claude Helvetius, philosopher, Vore, 1717; John Peter, physician, London, 1792; John Wilkes, political reformer, London, 1797; Heinrich Schliemann, archaeologist, Naples, 1890; Roger Keyes, Baron Keyes, Admiral of the Fleet, Buckingham, 1945; James Stephens, novelist and poet, London, 1950; Harry S. Truman, 33rd American President 1945-53; Kansas City, 1972; Sir Lennox Berkeley, composer, 1989. Marie and Pierre Curie discovered radium while experimenting with pitchblende, 1898. The German battleship *Scharnhorst* was sunk by the Royal Navy, 1943.

University news

Ulster Dr B. Graham, School of Environmental Studies, has been appointed Professor of Human Geography. Mr H. McMahon, head of the School of Education, has been appointed Professor of Education.

BMDS: 0171 680 6880
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

Let the new year hold no terrors for us

□ The Queen, in her Christmas message, offered Christian comfort to those who have suffered. But she recalled particularly the state visit of Nelson Mandela, "that most gracious of men". This is the full text

To look back is not necessarily to be nostalgic. When I come to Sandringham each year, I like to reflect on what Christmas must have been like when King Edward VII, my great grandfather, and Queen Alexandra first came here as young parents. I remember my own childhood Christmases here, with my father and mother, and a great family gathering, and now I delight in seeing my children and grandchildren enjoying the same traditions.

Christmas is the celebration of the birth of the founder of the Christian faith, an event which took place almost 2,000 years ago; every year, at this time we are asked to look back at that extraordinary story and remind ourselves of the message which inspired Christ's followers then, and which is just as relevant today.

At Christmas I enjoy looking back on some of the events of the year. Many have their roots in history but still have a real point for us today. I recall, especially, a dazzling spring day in Norwich when I attended the Maundy Service, the cathedral providing a spectacular setting. The lovely service is always a reminder of Christ's words to His disciples: "Love one another; as I have loved you." It sounds so simple, yet it proves so hard to obey.

In June came Trooping the Colour, a vivid reminder of this country's proud military tradition and of the discipline and dedication which our servicemen and women show in their taxing tasks of peace-keeping in many distant parts of the world.

Then, in October, I opened Parliament. This is not just a state occasion, but is also symbolic of the process of parliamentary democracy which we enjoy here in Britain and in so many countries of the Commonwealth. It is a process which seeks to express the ideal of the equality of all citizens under the law.

So, the past, with its traditions, has its lessons for us in the present. This year, in our travels, Prince Philip and I have also been looking to the future. I

Each year brings its share of difficulties for many families. This year has, I know, been no exception. And during it some have suffered bereavement of a tragic and shocking kind. At such times, it is tempting for all of us, especially those who suffer, to look back and say "If only". But to look back in that way is to look down a blind alley. Better to look forward and say "If only". If only we can live up to the example of the child who was born at Christmas with a love that came to embrace the whole world.

If only we can let Him recapture for us that time when we face the future with childhood's unbound faith. Armed with that faith, the new year, with all its challenges and chances, should hold no terrors for us, and we should be able to embark upon it undaunted.

My family joins me in wishing each one of you a very happy Christmas.



The Queen making her Christmas broadcast, which was recorded at Sandringham at the weekend

Campaigner plans 'green' burial site on daleside

By PAUL WILKINSON

A CAMPAIGNER for "green" graves is setting up a burial site on the side of a Yorkshire dales, next to a beauty spot owned by the National Trust.

John Bradfield plans to put 20 graves in eight acres of woodland and pasture beside the trust's property at Brimham Rocks, part of a designated area of outstanding natural beauty in Nidderdale, North Yorkshire. The area is also a site of special scientific interest (SSSI). The 380 acres of Brimham Rocks, owned by the National Trust, are known for their monolithic outcrops of millstone grit, naturally shaped into strange shapes.

He said: "In green burials there are no formal ceremonies, no coffin is used and the grave is unmarked. The location of their burial is inside a nature reserve so that people choosing a green grave are aware that they are helping to

run it as a nature reserve. The trust hopes to hear soon whether it has been successful in an attempt for £200,000 to administer the reserve. The grant would enable the trust to buy an adjacent cottage to use as a warden's home and to cover his costs.

Mr Bradfield has obtained a declaration from planners at Harrogate council that the Brimham site does not require planning permission provided the number of burials is limited to 25. He has already named the site Kate's Fell, after Kate Davies, one of the country's first occupational therapists, who gave him many of the ideas he now espouses.

"This is a tremendous step forward for green graves," he said. "It shows that we can set up burial places in nature reserves without planning permission. Both the National Trust and English Na-

tural Trust, which administers the SSSIs, have given us their blessing."

The site, on a southerly slope overlooking Nidderdale, comprises woodland, pasture and rock outcrops, like the larger stones on the National Trust land. The wildlife trust will be planting native oaks, which once grew on the daleside, from acorns gathered locally.

The SSSI is protected for its geological value and the rare plants, including sundews, bog asphodel and cowberry. "There will be no indication from outside that the place is anything other than upland country," Mr Bradfield said.

"It cannot be overlooked and the birch and rowan which are there already will screen it."

The legality of such burials

has been a grey area for some time, but Mr Bradfield and his colleagues have achieved several landmark decisions in the past three years to set clarify. There is no legal bar or the style of a green burial and planning permission is not required for an interment of up to two people in land they owned, including their own garden.

If the National Lottery does not provide help, Mr Bradfield hopes a benefactor will finance the long-term future of Kate's Fell. "We are not setting a standard fee for burial there, but we are letting people know it will cost far more than a normal funeral, several thousand pounds perhaps. But they know they are buying a grave in one of the most peaceful and pleasant locations in the country, which will contribute to the survival of the natural world."

Lottery fund rejects aid for Brontë birthplace

ADIMIRERS of the Brontës are searching for a benefactor with £500,000 to give away after the lottery fund turned down a project to restore the family's birthplace (Paul Wilkinson).

They want to create a tourist and study centre at the stone-built cottage in Thornton, west Yorkshire, four miles from the family's much better-known home at Haworth Parsonage. Time is short as the present occupants have divided the cottage into two and put it up for sale as private homes.

The family lived at the Grade II listed cottage for five years before moving to Haworth in 1820. Charlotte, Branwell, Emily and Anne Brontë were all born there and baptised in the nearby chapel of St James where their father Patrick was the curate. The church is now in ruins.

Brony Senior was later to write that the time spent at Thornton was the happiest in his life and it was there that his wife Maria died most of her kins.

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The Heritage Lottery Fund rejected the Brontë Birthplace Trust's bid on the ground that access to the building would bring only minor benefits to the public's understanding of the family. Ruth Vincenzi of the trust said: "We and the people of Thornton are completely bemused. This is a place of obvious historical importance. The Brontë sisters would have seen their mother writing her pamphlets and it is there that they would have had their first experiences of such things."

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRADE: 0171 481 1982
FAX: 0171 481 9313

DEATHS

DEATHS - On 21st December, at Manchester, Debra and Martin, son, Helen and brother for Alice and Eleanor.

DUNTY - On 17th December, at the Portland Hospital to Ann and John, son, Tom, and daughter, Jack Oscar Wynd, 70.

HANCOCK - On December 19th at the Portland Hospital to Kate (née Garthwaite) and Christopher, son, George. A brother for William.

MATCHCOCK MURKIN - As the Second Husband to Charlotte and Lou, a son, Jake Albert, a deceased brother for Louis.

JEWELL - On 15th December to Helen (née Duri) and Matthew, a daughter, Oliver Ann.

LANDWEHR - On December 22nd at the Portland Hospital to Marion and Peter. Our beautiful son Marco is born.

LEAH CLAY - To Richard Leah and Xanthe Clay on December 22nd, a son, Hugo John.

TOWNHOPKINS - On 2nd of December in Southampton, To Robert and Margaret, son, William Lee David.

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CORNWALL-LEIGH - See Guy of Cornwall.

GUY OF CORNWALL - On Sunday 22nd December suddenly at 10.30pm at the Royal Marsden, Sutton, husband of Bridget and father of Annabel and Christopher. Beloved wife of Russell. Mother of Lemley, Christopher and Alexander. Grandmother. Now much she will be missed. Burial at Brimham Church and Services of Thanksgiving on Tuesday 24th December at 2.30pm in Brimham Cemetery, Brimham, near Haworth. Flowers, donations to Brimham Church or to Brimham Cemetery, Brimham, Haworth, LS3 1QZ. Tel 01937 822800.

LEMPSON - Peacefully on December 20th aged 86 years at his home in Ellingham, Northumberland. Services of thanksgiving will be held at Ellingham Cemetery on Friday 24th December at 2.30pm. Interment at Ellingham Cemetery on Friday 24th December at 2.30pm. Tel 01670 782200.

HARRIS-MATTHEWS - Helen (née) suddenly at home on Sunday 22nd December at 10.30pm. Services of thanksgiving will be held at Ellingham Cemetery on Friday 24th December at 2.30pm. Interment at Ellingham Cemetery on Friday 24th December at 2.30pm. Tel 01670 782200.

KENNY - On December 22nd, peacefully in Leedon Nursing Home, in the hands of the very kind and caring staff. Gertie, aged 86 years, of Leedon, Somerset. Services of Thanksgiving on Tuesday 23rd December at 2.30pm. Interment at St Giles, Weston-super-Mare. Tel 01275 322222.

PARKES - Nancy (née) Parker, peacefully on December 22nd, aged 86 years, at her home in Ellingham, Northumberland. Services of thanksgiving on Friday 24th December at 2.30pm. Interment at Ellingham Cemetery on Friday 24th December at 2.30pm. Tel 01670 782200.

ROBERTSON - Margaret Robertson, 86, died peacefully on December 22nd, aged 86 years, at her home in Ellingham, Northumberland. Services of thanksgiving on Friday 24th December at 2.30pm. Interment at Ellingham Cemetery on Friday 24th December at 2.30pm. Tel 01670 782200.

STOCKWELL - On 22nd December, 1996, Rudolf Stockwell, 76, of Ellingham, Northumberland. Services of thanksgiving on Friday 24th December at 2.30pm. Interment at Ellingham Cemetery on Friday 24th December at 2.30pm. Tel 01670 782200.

WEBSTER - John Webster died peacefully on Thursday, 19th December, 1996, at his home in Ellingham, Northumberland. Services of thanksgiving on Friday 24th December at 2.30pm. Interment at Ellingham Cemetery on Friday 24th December at 2.30pm. Tel 01670 782200.

WILLIAMS - John Williams died peacefully on Saturday 22nd December, aged 86 years, at his home in Ellingham, Northumberland. Services of thanksgiving on Friday 24th December at 2.30pm. Interment at Ellingham Cemetery on Friday 24th December at 2.30pm. Tel 01670 782200.

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WILLIAMS</

OBITUARIES

RONNIE SCOTT

Ronnie Scott, jazz musician and nightclub owner, died on December 23 aged 69. He was born on January 28, 1927.

A laconic tenor saxophonist of suave appearance and mordant wit, Ronnie Scott was the founder of the legendary Soho night club which, for 37 years, formed the hub of the jazz musicians' world. The birthplace of British jazz, ever since its opening in the Sixties Ronnie Scott's has attracted the world's foremost jazz players. Pictures of Dizzy Gillespie, Coleman Hawkins, Stan Getz, Django Reinhardt, Art Blakey, Chet Baker and a collage of other stars, paper the walls behind the bar. All played in the club which, despite occasional financial crises, kept jazz alive in London and made it accessible, yet without ever destroying its elusive appeal.

A somnolent, smoky den with whitewashed walls and red vinyl padded bar, Ronnie Scott's has attracted generations of fans to its dimly lit tables to hear the masters of jazz playing — as they like to play best — in a relaxed, intimate setting. Scott himself, both as musician and sardonic master of ceremonies, was always there, his dark clothes offsetting his silvery hair, a cigarette or saxophone clamped in his letterbox mouth. He was infamous for his appalling jokes, but his quick repartee was nevertheless the bane of any inebriate foolish enough to cross swords with him.

Ronnie Scott was born in the East End of London and raised in a terraced house in Peacock Lane. His parents divorced when he was four years old and, without a father figure, he grew up cuddled and cossetted by his Jewish mother and grandmother. As a baby he was chosen above all others in the East End Mothers' Maternity Home to be presented to the Prince of Wales on a royal visit and from then on, although the family were never rich, his mother made sure that he wanted for nothing.

Unlike his playmates, he never had to make do with cobbled-together toys or turn to petty pilfering to get what he wanted. He was assured of shopbought scooters or a ha'penny piece to go down to the shops. Even when as a young teenager he entered the hare-brained scheme of stowing away on a boat and travelling to America, his mother indulged his whim, packing his bags for him. She knew her son would not even get near the vessels, patrolled by security guards.

Ronnie's single memory of his father, the saxophonist Jack Scott, was hazy. He recalled being taken to some restaurant in the West End where he was playing with Jack Hyton's band.

"I heard him ask my mother to give him one more chance. She refused." But though it was to be 12 years until he met his father again, Ronnie appeared to have inherited his passion for music. Among his most happy memories was lying curled in the warmth of his grandmother's bed listening to dance bands on the radio, and whenever he saw a musician carrying an instrument case he would stare long and hard after his departing footprints, wondering if the man could be his father.



Scott bought his first instrument, a cornet, for five shillings before graduating to a saxophone. "I walked past a musical instruments shop every day on my way to school, and I liked the look of them. There was an ancient soprano saxophone in the window: it had a double octave key which doesn't exist anymore. There were pads missing and I really didn't know a thing about the instrument: except that I had to have it." By then his mother had remarried, to Solomon Berger, and it was Ronnie's stepfather who this time indulged him, buying the instrument. Scott seemed to have an immediate empathy with it and for a while he was playing with Jack Hyton's band.

There were no professional jazz musicians at that time and Scott followed his father in playing dance music. "To succeed, he soon realised, he would need a decent instrument and lessons. His stepfather again obliged, buying him a new and better saxophone and procuring Jack Lynn — Vera Lynn's father-in-law — as a teacher. Lynn taught Scott the basics, but it was with professional musicians who played jazz for their own amusement in jamming sessions that Scott learnt most.

It was at the age of 16 that Scott's mother at last introduced him, over a cup of tea sipped in a caf\u00e9 in Archer

had won a county scholarship to Central Foundation School and harboured early ambitions to be an architect. Scott left school when he was 15. Too young to serve he worked in a record shop by day and spent his evenings jamming on his saxophone at the Oxford and St George's Boys' Club in the East End. The small band they formed was named after him, the Ronnie Berger Band — Berger being his stepfather's name and the one Ronnie went by at that time.

With the outbreak of the Second World War and the blossoming of Soho drinking dens to cater for the crowds of drivers looking for cut-hours revelry, jazz musicians began to find a willing, if wozy, audience. It did not matter that he was a beginner. Scott later said, his listeners were too drunk to care. The war also introduced jazz from America to Britain, brought over on the V discs made for American soldiers and, even though the Musicians' Union had banned American jazz players from performing in Britain, Scott managed to get hold of "acetates" — bootleg copies — of much of the music.

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Although he was a bright boy who

Street, to his father. The two were never to become close, though Ronnie's father was justifiably proud when his son, at the age of 19, was invited to become the youngest member of Ted Heath's band. Although he was fired after nine months, his career never looked back.

When Ronnie was 24, his father invited him to join the band he was leading on board the Queen Mary sailing to New York. There Scott fell under the spell of Charlie Parker and bebop. "When I first heard Charlie it was a revelation," he said. "It was contemporary jazz." He stayed longer than he had intended in New York, surviving with his friend, the drummer Tony Crombie, on two coffees and one shared doughnut a day.

Returning eventually to London, Scott resolved to find a new home for classic jazz. At first he hired rehearsal rooms in London, such as Max's in Windmill Street. Young people would come to dance. In 1953 he formed a nine-piece band including several top players of the time and established himself as one of the most popular musicians around. His next group, the Jazz Couriers, with Tubby Hayes, also did well. But with the lifting of the ban on American musicians playing in Britain there was stiff competition and Scott, deciding he needed more exposure, opened a club.

Together with Peter King, a former saxophone player in his band, he started in Gerard Street in 1959 in a basement den at the bottom of a narrow stairway. With its five-bob admission charge, bare floor, rows of seats near the bandstand and basic lavatories, it was a far cry from the club he was to open five years later on a new premises in Frith Street.

At that time a six-nights-a-week jazz club was unheard of. "Anyone who opens a jazz club is in for a struggle," Scott later acknowledged. You either accept that or you open a discotheque or strip joint." But Scott survived and it was there that the British jazz scene was born and brought up. Even when the club teetered on the brink of financial disaster his humour did not desert him. Eat, drink and be merry, he would enjoin his clients. "Pretend you are on the *Titanic*."

Scott's job brought him face to face not only with all the idols of his youth, people like Count Basie, Sarah Vaughan, Coleman "Hawk" Hawkins, and Stan Getz, but also with the aristocrats and celebrities of the day. Princess Margaret, Peter Sellers, Spike Milligan and Kenneth Clarke were all regulars. The club became so successful that in 1961 Ronnie Scott's Club in Birmingham was opened, in 1961 Scott was appointed OBE.

A year ago Scott himself was forced to stop playing the saxophone because of a gum operation in which all his teeth were extracted. Dentists, however, fitted a plate and Scott had resumed practice. He was planning to play for the first time in public again on Christmas Eve.

Ronnie Scott never married. Though he had, in his own words, "chased women halfway round the world," he thought that, like his own father, he had not made a good parent. He is survived by his two children.

MAJOR ROBERT FIELD-MARSHAM

Major Robert Field-Marsham, former master of the Eridge Hunt, died on November 24 aged 91. He was born on August 5, 1905.

THE BOXING Day meet of the Eridge Hunt on the spacious common at Tunbridge Wells was a gathering that always gave particular pleasure to the hunt's former master, Robert Field-Marsham. He was the born countryman who lived for green fields, great woods, wild life and foxhunting. He wished others the same pleasure.

Boxing Day meets are different from the rest of the hunting calendar. They attract up to several thousand townsmen and their children in cars and on foot. Field-Marsham used to say of the Boxing Day meet: "It is the great day in the year when town meets country." In his quiet way he had a knack of making everybody feel welcome. Children were encouraged to make friends with the hunt horses and hounds and to ask questions of the master and his staff. The warmth of his welcome was typical of a man who always added two words to his letters before

signing them: "Keep Smiling." His own beginnings as a huntsman could not have been more modest. He had a bobbery pack which he hunted on the family estate on the Sussex-Kent border and any other place where he was welcome. These bobbery packs originated in India to hunt jackal and consisted of a mix of hunting hounds, usually of unknown ancestry, and a couple of dogs. Field-Marsham's pack was mostly made up of terriers.

He went on to bigger and better packs, becoming one of the outstanding amateurs to carry the horn in the past half century. Also, in his latter

years he was acknowledged as one of the finest judges of the foxhound. This brought him invitations, readily accepted, to judge at the top hound shows on both sides of the Atlantic. His judging was brisk, knowing as he did, exactly what he wanted in the hound's outlook and confirmation. This was especially appreciated by spectators who, even at the bigger hound shows, have to sit for hours after hour on very hard seats.

Robert Field-Marsham was born at Ashurst Park near Tunbridge Wells. Immensely tall and slim, he resembled his father in appearance, his

father being known in his army days as "The Pole". The son was a natural athlete. At Eton he and his younger brother, Charlie, were both in the Cricket XI. After school he joined the Army and was commissioned into the Queen's Bays, serving in India for more than a decade. Here again his sporting prowess was evident to the fore. At polo he was noted for his length of shot and skilful tactics playing at No. 3. In 1924 he was in the Queen's Bays team that won the inter-regimental cup for polo.

Back in England he hunted his bobbery pack and began to take a serious interest in foxhunting. He was extraordinarily lucky in his mentors. His gifts as a huntsman, which came from a close affinity with hounds and his deep knowledge of the countryside, was noticed by William Freeman, a man exceptionally good at his job as professional huntsman to the Eridge. (His more famous brother, Frank Freeman, was huntsman to the Pytchley when the Queen, as a child, had her only ride to hounds.)

Field-Marsham went on to become master of the Aldershot foxhounds and then moved into the big time as joint master of the Bicester and Walden Hill, a four-day-a-week country in which he hunted hounds two days a week with the professional huntsman doing so on the other two days. The Bicester then attracted wealthy men from the City of London who demanded a high level of fast sport in order to shake up their livers and tire their over-fresh horses. Field-Marsham was not found wanting.

Here again he had distinguished mentors as he rose to

EDWARD LEADBITTER

Edward Leadbitter, Labour MP for Hartlepool, 1964-92, died on December 24 aged 77. He was born on June 18, 1919.

EDWARD LEADBITTER frequently seemed in a state of perpetual indignation with his party, the state of the country and life itself; although at other times he was full of northeastern cheeriness. He was always conscious of the importance of his position as an MP. When a telegraph pole was erected in his constituency without his knowledge he fired off a protest to Tony Benn, who was Postmaster-General at the time and, therefore, the minister responsible for telegraph poles. Successive Prime Ministers also became accustomed to receiving his regular letters of complaint or advice.

Leadbitter was born in Easington, the constituency associated for so long with Ermal Shinwell, but he spent most of his life in Hartlepool. One of his grievances was that the Labour whips would not allow him to become mayor of the town in 1965. In view of the Wilson Government's precarious one-figure majority their insistence that he should be a full-time MP was understandable.

Hartlepool compensated him, however, making him the borough's first honorary freeman in 1983. He was also the long-term president of Hartlepool Football Club and continued to live in the town after he retired from the Commons.

In the House he first became noticeable as one of the more excitable members of the 1964 intake. As an MP he was loyal but difficult. He was all for scrapping the Wilson prices and incomes policy, he opposed the Callaghan cuts in 1976 and he described Britain's continuing membership of the EEC as an unmitigated disaster.

Earlier, while his party was about to embark on the Jenkins programme of sexual reforms, he had protested vigorously about the possible legalisation of homosexuality.

He was always unpredictable. Although a miner's son brought up in a colliery town, he was prepared to consider any sensible alternative to coal. His backing for one nuclear power station was so forthright that it brought accusations of disloyalty from the miners.

He served in the Royal Artillery during the war, gaining a commission and being appointed a War Office Gunner Instructor. Cheltenham Teachers' Training College completed the education he had begun at Easington Col-



lery School and this enabled him to become one of the postwar emergency-trained teachers. He taught at Hartlepool secondary schools from 1949 and devoted most of his spare time to politics. He had joined the Labour Party in 1938 and lost no opportunity of proselytising his views when he was in the Army. Back in Hartlepool he progressed from canvassing to membership of the borough council and in 1958 became president of his constituency party.

Then, in 1964, he was chosen to fight the general election.

The Hartlepools, with a permanent unemployment problem, might have seemed a cast-iron Labour seat but in fact it was held for the Conservatives — by Commander J.S. Kerans (of *HMS Amethyst* fame) between 1959 and 1964. As far back as 1945 Labour had won it in the Attlee landslide by a bare 275 votes. Once Leadbitter had recaptured it in 1964, however, the party never looked back. Its majority grew steadily firmer — in 1979, for instance, it registered no swing to the Tories at the time of the Thatcher triumph — and when Leadbitter came to hand over this working-class constituency to his successor, the slightly improbable figure of Peter Mandelson, it proved safer than ever.

Leadbitter's great Commons coup was to ask the question in the House which prompted Margaret Thatcher to make his own impact on fox-hunting. That brilliant huntsman Sir Peter Farquhar and his wife, with her encyclopedic knowledge of hound breeding, were in control in the neighbouring hunt country, the Wadham Chase. They were tiring and imaginative that marked his endeavours when breeding hounds. A couple of times a year he would take the long road down to Pembrokeshire to confer with Mr Gibby, a nationally acknowledged expert on Friesians.

A month before his death he moved back to Ashurst Park, now a place of help and comfort for the elderly, and which the family had left some 40 years previously. In his later years he liked to walk out one or two dogs in the evening at dusk before settling down to a whisky. It was after this ritual that he passed away quietly.

Field-Marsham married twice: first Gee Filkinson whom he later divorced, then a second time, Joan Nevill, widow of his younger brother Charlie. Both predeceased him. He is survived by his stepson.

cabinets of ebony of the most lavish and costly taste and workmanship, which are understood to have been once in the possession of Cardinal Wolsey, for whom they are said to have been made, and they are indeed well-worthy the enormous expenditure of that princely priest.

These cabinets have all been newly polished, and are admirably well arranged in this gallery, that on quitting one after a minute examination of its beauties, you are quickly again gratified by lighting upon another of still more exquisite attractions; the intermediate spaces between these cabinets are occupied by busts we have already named, tripod, camels, sofa, serape &c. so that not an inch remains unappropriated to some delightful specimen of taste and art.

At each door leading out of the corridor to His Majesty's apartments, are two tripods, richly carved and gilt, each bearing three lamps; and the effect of these at night, when lighted, on the surrounding ornaments, is said to surpass belief in its magnificence.

There are also placed in the corridor at convenient distances several very rich ormolu clocks, by Villany, so that the eye in this place never wanders, one rich or rare work of art immediately succeeding to another, and the whole presenting a constellation of the most magnificent and costly grandeur.



Field-Marsham at the Boxing Day meet of the Eridge Hunt, 1959

WINDSOR CASTLE

We gave some short time ago, a partial but most accurate, description of the exterior appearance and internal embellishments of the Castle, nearly to the extent that they had then proceeded, and we shall not fail from time to time to resume the subject with accuracy and faithfulness in detail which enables opportunity may prevent the possibility of doing so, until the accomplishment of this magnificent national structure.

The corridor or gallery which we before described as extending round two entire sides of the quadrangle that forms the building, is now completed, and very nearly furnished with specimens of the richest works of art; these consist of pictures, by Zoffany and Canaletto, which ornament its walls, the greater number by the latter artist; and although the works of this master are not now held in any very high degree of estimation, there are here some beautiful specimens of his art these pictures, we believe, were all the property of his late Majesty, and on that account possess a more sacred interest and value with their present owner. There are besides these hung round the walls, to be seen, the portraits of Nelson, St. Vincent, Pitt, and many other great names.

In different parts of this corridor, too, as you walk along, the eye occasionally rests upon

ON THIS DAY

December 26, 1828

James Wyatt (later Sir Jeffry Wyatville) won the competition, commissioned by George IV in 1824, to remodel most of Windsor Castle. In the fire of 1992 most of the castle's works of art were saved.

some almost animated busts, from the perfectness of its resemblance, in marble or in bronze; these are all of some eminent men, and of His Majesty's personal and private friends.

Amongst the latter are busts of his late Royal Highness the Duke of York, and the late Marquis of Hastings. At the head of the corridor next to the door leading into the music gallery stands a magnificent bust in bronze of King James I.

There are besides these busts, a number of figures in bronze, most exquisitely executed by the hands of the first artists, and here and there the attention is frequently arrested by

NEWS

Killers 'should be beheaded'

■ The brother of an Australian nurse murdered in Saudi Arabia has called for two British nurses charged with the crime to be publicly beheaded if found guilty.

Yvonne Gilford's brother, Frank, spoke as Lucille McLauchlan protested her innocence through her family in Dundee after telephoning them from the jail in Dhahran where she is being held with Deborah Parry. Pages 1, 3

Archbishop's warning against the Tarot

■ The Archbishop of York warned people not to turn to "feel-good" spiritualities such as astrology and Tarot cards after a year haunted by the horrors of Dunblane and the murder of Philip Lawrence. The Archbishop of Canterbury also focused on the two tragedies, saying society had come adrift from its moral roots. Page 1

Church bomber

Two sisters were killed and many other people seriously injured after a woman blew herself up in a crowded German church during midnight Mass... Pages 1, 15

Rates alert

Eddie George, the Governor of the Bank of England, said that interests would have to rise early in the new year to counter the threat of inflation. Page 1

Masonic police

Police officers who are Masons should have to disclose their membership to remove suspicions about the movement's influence, the Police Complaints Commission says. Page 2

Fatbusting drug

An American drug company has come up with a drug that prevents the body from absorbing almost a third of the fat that is eaten. Page 3

Fire kills mother

A mother died and two children were seriously hurt after a petrol bomb was put through their letter box. Page 4

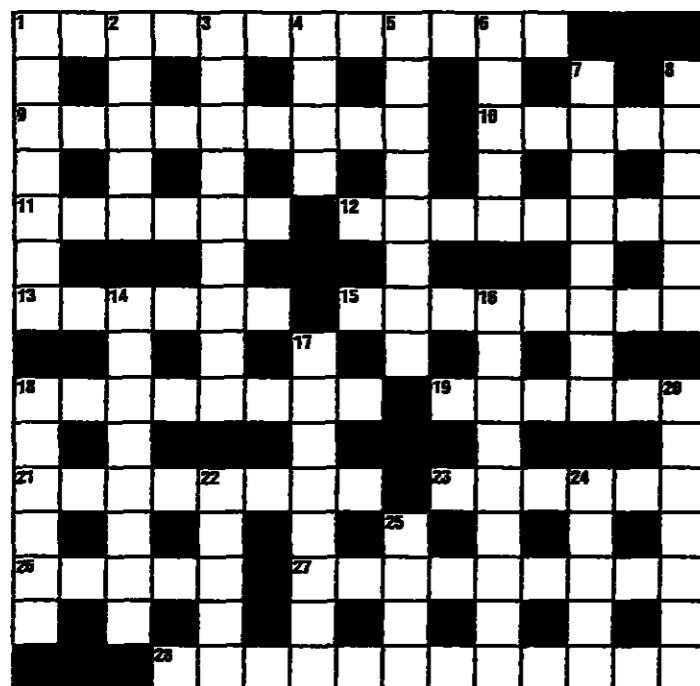
Hunt for giant squid

Up to 60ft long, with a complex brain, eyes as big as dinner plates and a powerful parrot-like beak, the giant squid is the largest unknown animal on Earth — but nobody has seen it in its natural setting. Now naturalists aim to remedy that. Page 9

Dreaming of a bookies' payout

■ Bookmakers will have to pay out thousands of pounds after a light dusting of snow in some parts of the country. A public relations man who gave 1,300 customers a present of a £1 bet on snow in London came up trumps with a half-hour fall before dawn — the capital's first officially acknowledged white Christmas for two decades. Page 1

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,360

**ACROSS**

- 1 Today's activity — cubists' first retrospective festival showing great art (6,6).
9 Break vow to her, right? (5,4).

10 Old wine in Japan really replaced by a port there (5).

11 Oriental flower festival (6).

12 Shouted and scared me awfully (8).

13 Fruit drink (6).

15 Lighter's satisfactory, passing cigarette around (3,5).

18 Excess weight of young boxer? (5,3).

19 Conservative way to get back — it could ruin the House (3,3).

21 Prepared mix with ripe onions, primarily? (8).

23 Some chap I called in top position (9).

26 Break out, getting clean over middle of gates (5).

Solution to Puzzles No 20,359

NOSUCHLUCK CHIC
I S H E H A A
C A R D R E A D E R W R E N
K O I R E T B D
T O Y S N O R T H P O L E
F G T E S H U R
E V E R M O R E D E C H E E
V W A S I U E L
E X C E S S S N O W B A L L
R A B C N S I R A
P A N T O M I M E K I S
I D X C A S E S
T O L D N O B L E E A L
C H E L L E S F T E
H O S I E H A N D I N H A N D

- 27 Flattens note for heavy rock (9).
28 Luck, when kite flying, is generating tension (5-7).

DOWN

- 1 South London area banning its last two strikes (7).
2 Old source of drink's unknown to dry up (5).
3 Inexperienced jumper's got in a state (3,6).
4 Fellow stopping witches before end of spell? (4).
5 Community official making Jack & Co. regret turning up (8).
6 Turn volume up on Maher's 5th to demonstrate depth of feeling (5).
7 Smash hit dance composer (8).
8 Fiber arriving in German parts (6).
14 Stimulant drug to adulterate punch (8).
16 Father splitting capital treated us equably (4,5).
17 He dislikes the bellincous condition one's put in treaty (8).
18 The French Messiahs appearing for trial, all over strike (6).
20 Shade of dye around mid-blues — it's a benzene derivative (7).
22 Erect stone church (5).
24 Dandelion seeds left in pile of hay (5).
25 Pirate's shot aimed towards leg (4).

Times Two Crossword, page 44

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HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday: Highest day temp: Germany 70 (45); Lowest day temp: Andorra, Aragon, Spain 42 (35); highest rainfall: Netherlands, Tyre, 0.15in; highest sunshine: Norway 6.7.

General: England and Wales will be dry, but in some places overnight fog may be slow to clear. It will be cold, with a widespread frost overnight, and the frost will be slow to lift, where the fog lingers. Winds will be generally light.

Scotland and Northern Ireland will have a cold, frosty start. Cloud will spread into northwestern parts of Scotland bringing sleet or snow, which will turn to rain at lower levels, but there will be further accumulations of snow on the hills.

London, SE England, E Anglia, Central S England, E Midlands, Channel Islands, SW England, S Wales: Early fog patches clearing, generally dry with sunny spells. Wind south-southwesterly, fresh again by evening. Maximum temperature 40C (39F).

E. England, W Midlands, N Wales, NW England, Central N England, NE England: Early fog again by evening. Maximum temperature 40C (39F).

Outlook for Friday and Saturday: Rain, sleet or snow in the north will spread south, petering out.

IN THE TIMES

POP
David Sinclair reviews the hits and misses of 1996: a troubled year for Oasis**INTERVIEW**
Valerie Grove talks to Lady Olivier about the revival of her screen career

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London, NE England, Argyll, NW Scotland, Shetland, Northern Ireland: Cloudy with rain or sleet and snow on the mountains. Wind south to southwesterly, fresh to strong. Milder. Maximum temperature 5C to 7C (41F to 45F).

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ARTURO MARAVIA

Preview: Another romp with Ratty, Toad and Mole in *The Willows in Winter* (TV, 2.45pm) Review: How *EastEnders* has become an insult to the working-class and an absurd distortion of reality: grim, graceless and malevolent. Page 43

Fox and hound

Legislation to ban hunting with hounds is not the most appropriate way to guarantee the welfare of the countryside. Page 19

A very English Roman

Let Seneca stand for an early example of British pragmatism in philosophy and politics. Politics still needs its intellectuals as well as its fixers. Page 19

Neptune's big secret

The search for the giant squid provides science at the end of the millennium with its most appropriate quarry — the pursuit of the last great living creature to evade man's eye. Page 19

WILLIAM REES-MOGG

Even now, literary fame is only stirring for John Aubrey. He published 'only one complete book in his lifetime and, despite his undoubtedly scholarship, his contemporaries saw him as a credulous gossip. Page 18

JOANNA PITMAN

Despite the modest but growing influence the Koreans have over our lives, much about their society and institutions remains unknown, hidden behind misunderstanding and cliché. Page 18

MAGNUS LINKLATER

The time may have come for the Dunblane parents to hand the campaigning over to others, to rejoin the community of which they are a part and to allow the healing process to begin. Page 18

Ronnie Scott, jazz musician and nightclub owner; Edward Leadbetter, former Labour MP; Major Robert Field-Marshall, former master of the Edge Hill Hunt. Page 26

Lord St John of Fawsley defends the Duke of Edinburgh's right to speak on guns; Gorbachev, Prada, and *The Times*; unruly children; Sunday as a day of rest; Freemasonry. Page 19

THE TIMES

IN THE TIMES

THE TIMES

2

INSIDE
SECTION
2
TODAY



BUSINESS

Check whether your building society bonus is at risk
PAGES 41-44



ARTS

Eminent Victoriana: back to the days of coloured sculpture
PAGES 32, 33



TRAVEL

British ski market reaches new summit
PAGE 38

TELEVISION
AND
RADIO
PAGES 42, 43

THURSDAY DECEMBER 26 1996

Silverwood may be sacrificed for second Test against Zimbabwe



Silverwood, left, raises a smile in conversation with White during England's delayed net practice yesterday, even though he may lose his place to the Yorkshire all-rounder

England ponder White option

FROM SIMON WILDE
IN HARARE

ENGLAND ought to be going into the second Test match against Zimbabwe, which starts here today, brimful of confidence. After all, if David Lloyd, the coach, has said "we murdered them and they know it" once since the drawn first Test match ended four days ago, he must have said it a thousand times.

So it is surprising to dwell on the change that England are contemplating making to their side for the match, in which victory would give them their first overseas Test series triumph for four years. It involves the far from bold notion of replacing a specialist bowler with a batsman who bowls. Bolstering your side with a seventh batsman seems a strange way to show that you mean business.

The batsman in question is Craig White, the bowler Chris Silverwood. White played the most recent of his six Test matches — all of which have taken place in England — 16 months ago. In those matches he claimed eight wickets at more than 40 runs apiece, and

one of the characteristics of the first phase of his international career was the apparent reluctance of Michael Atherton, the England captain, to give him the ball.

Silverwood, on the other hand, was playing his first

Test match in Bulawayo last week and while he, too, found Atherton cautious about employing him, he came away with four economical wickets in 25 overs. Does he really deserve to be dropped for a man who reached Africa only on Monday night, has not played for a fortnight and prepared with one brief net session yesterday afternoon?

Logically, the decision is flawed, but for England the temptation to play White is founded in reasoning not so much to do with winning the match. Their tour to date has been dogged by the absence of an effective all-rounder. Ronnie Irani, the original choice, having shown himself to be short of the necessary form and fitness.

One consequence has been that, with Cork missing, they have an alarmingly long tail, with Croft, Gough and Mulally batting at least one place too high in the order at Nos 7, 8 and 9 respectively. Indeed, when Croft made his Test debut against Pakistan at the Oval in August, he went in at

No 10. Without such a weak lower order, the embarrassing three-day defeat at the hands of Mashonaland might never have happened.

In short, now that they finally have an all-rounder with them who can make runs

and No 7 and chip in with the odd wicket, England want to play him. However, they may come to regret not having a bowler of Silverwood's accuracy in a seam attack not otherwise noted for its precision. If England's top six batsmen cannot take enough runs off Zimbabwe's modest attack — even one strengthened by the likely replacement of Bryan Strang by Eddo Brandes — why should a seventh?

It is also ironic that, while England are contemplating such timidity, it has emerged that Lloyd was involved in "an exchange of words" with a local official, Ian Groggin, of the Mashonaland Cricket Association and Zimbabwe Cricket Union, immediately after the dramatic end to the first Test match, in which Lloyd allegedly berated him for Zimbabwe's negative tactics.

The matter was quickly resolved in "amicable" fashion between the English management and the Zimbabwe Cricket Union, so that, although it was brought to the attention of Hanuman Singh, the International Cricket

Council match referee, no disciplinary action was taken.

For all the debate about England's seam attack, it is spin that may hold the key to the match, and the combined performance of Croft and Tufnell will be vital to the visitors' chances. They outbowled the seamers in Bulawayo, claimed match figures of 11 for 276 and conceded runs at a fraction over two an over.

There will certainly be no question of Atherton being afraid to throw either of them the ball. "Spinners can hold the game for you in the field if you are not getting wickets," he said. "I thought the crucial stage of the first Test was the last session of the fourth day, where the spinners and seamers built up pressure, particularly on Houghton, and we got three wickets. It was an excellent spell of bowling."

"The wickets over here have turned a bit more than perhaps wickets do in England for the finger spinners and they have benefited."

England's Christmas Day plans were disrupted when rain made the Harare nets too wet for the intended morning practice. The session — Eng-

land's first in three days — was switched to the afternoon, delaying their Christmas meal until the evening. Rain is again expected to interrupt the match.

Australia favourites, page 31



FORM CHOICE

Richard Dunwoody, above, rides One Man at Kempton Park today looking for a record fourth victory in the King George VI Chase. The three-times champion jockey reveals his thoughts on the big race exclusively in *The Times*

PAGE 29

CHOICE DAY

A full guide to where to find the best of the Boxing Day football and racing

PAGES 24, 28, 29, 30



CHOICE MOMENT

Simon Barnes continues a series on the best days of the sporting year by recalling the feat of the man who wore the golden shoes

PAGE 27

PRIZE CHOICE

Test your knowledge with the prize Jumbo Sports Crossword

PAGE 27

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Racing smitten by frost

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

WHILE England's cricketers watched the rain fall in Harare, weather also took toll of sport back home. The race meetings scheduled today for Ayr, Newton Abbot and Wincanton have been abandoned because of frost.

Four other meetings — Hereford, Huntingdon, Sedgfield and Market Rasen — depend on inspections this morning, but the top meeting at Kempton Park should go ahead.

Hereford inspect at 7.30, needing an improvement in conditions. Sedgfield and Huntingdon have inspections at 7.30. Market Rasen at 8.30.

Bridgend's rugby union match against Mosley has also been cancelled.

Charge adds to Robson's problems

MIDDLEBROUGH go into FA Carling Premiership match with Everton this afternoon still surrounded by injury worries and in the knowledge that they have been formally charged with a breach of league rules after calling off the trip to Blackpool Rovers last Saturday.

Bryan Robson, the Middlebrough manager, will assess the fitness of Juninho, Steve Vickers and Curtis Fleming this morning. All have a 50-50 chance of playing, but Nigel Pearson, Philip Stamp and Alan Moore are ruled out.

Middlesbrough pulled out of the game at Ewood Park because they had 23 players unavailable because of injuries, illness and suspensions, but they did so without permission, and the rules state that clubs must fulfil their fixture obligations.

Mike Lee, a Premier League

spokesman, said that Middlesbrough must now appear before a league commission on January 14 to answer the charge. The club is prepared to present medical evidence to support its case at the hearing.

Meanwhile Robson has replied to Fabrizio Ravanelli's criticism of training facilities and coaching methods in the Premiership. Ravanelli, the £7 million Italy international, whose scathing remarks were made in an interview on Italian television, claimed that he was forced to train on his own at Middlesbrough using charts supplied by Juventus, his previous club.

Ravanelli trained on his own when he stayed behind

during our pre-season tours, but he does not train on his own now," Robson said. "The English system takes it all on players. You cannot overdo it in training otherwise it affects your fitness in matches."

Arsène Wenger, the Arsenal

manager, has accused Nikolai Jerkun, Nottingham Forest's Croatian defender, of cheating

and said that it was Jerkun who should have been sent off instead of Ian Wright, the Arsenal forward, during their clash at the City Ground.

Wright was shown the red

card on Saturday after an off-the-ball incident with Jerkun during Forest's 2-1 win. The defender crashed to the ground as the players jostled for positions while awaiting a free kick and Jerkun claimed afterwards that his shin was ruled by Wright's studs.

Wright, who has denied the

accusation, now faces a three-

match ban, but Steve Lodge,

the referee, who admits that he

acted on his assistant's advice,

has promised to look at a video

recording.

Wenger said: "It is obvious

from the film that Jerkun was

cheating. I agree Ian Wright might have acted provocatively and I know that we have to adjust our ways to make sure we keep 11 players on the field, but the reaction by Jerkun to anything that Wright did was ridiculous. I think the video makes it perfectly clear and I think the matter should be judged on that evidence."

"What Jerkun did is some-



Robson: concerns continue

thing for which foreign players have a bad reputation. Speaking generally, I think an English player would not act like that, but foreigners are bringing bad things as well as good things to the game here."

Meanwhile, Wright faces

Sheffield Wednesday at Hills-

borough this afternoon knowing

that a booking could put him out of Arsenal's plans at

the start of the new year.

Unless Lodge changes his

mind after watching the film.

Wright will miss Arsenal's FA

Cup meeting with Sunderland on January 4, a Premiership

match against the same opposition a week later and the next

match as well.

Preston's favourite son reflects on his lifetime of service on and off the field

Man of the people who was touched by the gods

Rob Hughes finds Tom Finney working hard and still in fine form at the age of 74

Tom Finney eyed the Porsches and Mercedes of the modern footballers at a pre-Christmas game. "I don't blame them, I don't envy them, but all this money that we're paying, sometimes for very ordinary players, means they have lost the common touch," the still-sprightly septuagenarian said.

Finney, from a family of six whose mother died when she was 32, played and simultaneously built up a business on values of loyalty, respect and sheer endeavour that need brook no comparisons with today's commercial sporting world. But, before the players, who today are manipulated by agents and who are rewarded for moving on to new clubs and new contracts every two or three years, ask what this old gentleman can know of their temptations, listen to what happened on May 18, 1952, when Finney left the field in Florence, where Italy and England had drawn 1-1.

"The president of Palermo approached me," he said. "He was a prince, somebody said. He wanted me to sign for his club, and he was offering a signing-on fee of £10,000 in my hand, and £120 a game."

"Are you interested?" the Palermo prince asked. Finney was bemused. A one-club man, Preston-born and bred, had to admit that he was very interested; he told his wife, Elsie, that for the signing-on fee he would have to play for Preston North End for ten more years at the weekly wage of £14.

But, back on home soil, Nathaniel Buchan, the Preston chairman, said: "If she doesn't play for us, she doesn't play for anybody." Finney said that he would like a decision from the board. "I'll tell them the board decision nah, lad!" And that was the end of Finney's wanderlust.

By 1960 he had retired, having scored 187 goals in 431 League games for Preston, and 30 goals in 76 England internationals. He was the most complete forward of his time: he began 40 internationals on the right wing, sometimes preferred to Stanley Matthews, 33 at outside left, three at centre forward ... and twice, because of injuries to others, he moved to what he felt was his natural position, inside left. He scored from each of those positions, and between 1955 and 1958, playing centre forward for Preston, he hit the target 66 times in 98 games.

All this from a man who served in the Army during the Second World War, from the ages of 20 to 24. Think about it — those are all the years through which we have come to know, to be impressed by, Steve McManaman. And, no



I'm very concerned about the ferocity of tackles and this feigning you get from players today'

Finney on the modern game

League," he said. "I don't have Sky, but when I do get to those matches, I'm very concerned about the ferocity of tackles. We had players who were real hard men — Dave Mackay, Tommy Docherty, Jimmy Scoular — they were hard, they would take the ball, the man and everything else. There was never anything malicious, and this feigning that you get from players today just would never happen."

The making of a career, the making of men comes and goes with the times. Finney's father, to whom he listened a lot, dissuaded him from signing on full, six shillings a week apprentice terms

for Preston, even though the boy had made up his mind at the age of seven that he wanted to follow in the steps of Alex James.

By the time war came, Finney was a qualified plumber, eternally to be remembered as the Preston Plumber. He travelled to matches on the bus with supporters — the common touch — and, when the Army took him overseas, he turned adversity into opportunity.

"We had a team, The Wanderers, with marvellous players like Harry Clifton, Mickey Fenton, Bertie Mee," he said. "That alone was good experience, but playing on hard pitches in Egypt, against really tricky opponents who ran around in bare feet and in bandages, sharpened up our game."

His brother, Joe, had written from Burma suggesting that, if they got out of this alive, Tom the Plumber and Joe the Electrician should go into business. Finney Brothers expanded quickly after the war, and grew, despite Joe's untimely death through cancer at 47, into a company employing 120 men with a £2.5 million turnover.

Even today, Tom still goes to work, pricing quantities across a range of lighting, electrical, plumbing and central heating and acoustic ceilings. And still the lure of the game, the fidelity with Preston, takes him to Deepdale, where his credibility is the catalyst to rebuilding the club from the decline where it fell once Finney hung up his boots.

Of all the men he played with, none was more decorated than Sir Stanley Matthews. Yet Finney shared a room with Matthews on England duty and, when the knight asked the commoner how much he received from his percentage on boot sales, Matthews was shocked. "Hell, that's more than the £500 the Co-op are paying me," Matthews said.

"I told him: 'Stan, you're a chump going in for a lump sum.' This from a player earning £1,000 a year for being 'Sir Tom' of Preston, and, he reckons, £3,000 per year from his business acumen, his newspaper column, his boot and ball endorsements.

"It's been a good life, make no mistake," Finney said in the kitchen of his bungalow in the Fulwood district of Preston, where, man and boy, he has been a legend for most of his lifetime. He met Pelé, just once, at a dinner party.

There you have the shining example that, no matter what the rewards, a man can have dignity along with everything else," Finney said. He regrets only that Pelé saw Finney's England also just once: the Brazilian's father had taken him to the United

States, told him that he would see a real side, England. "And we blooming well lost, one-nothing to the USA."

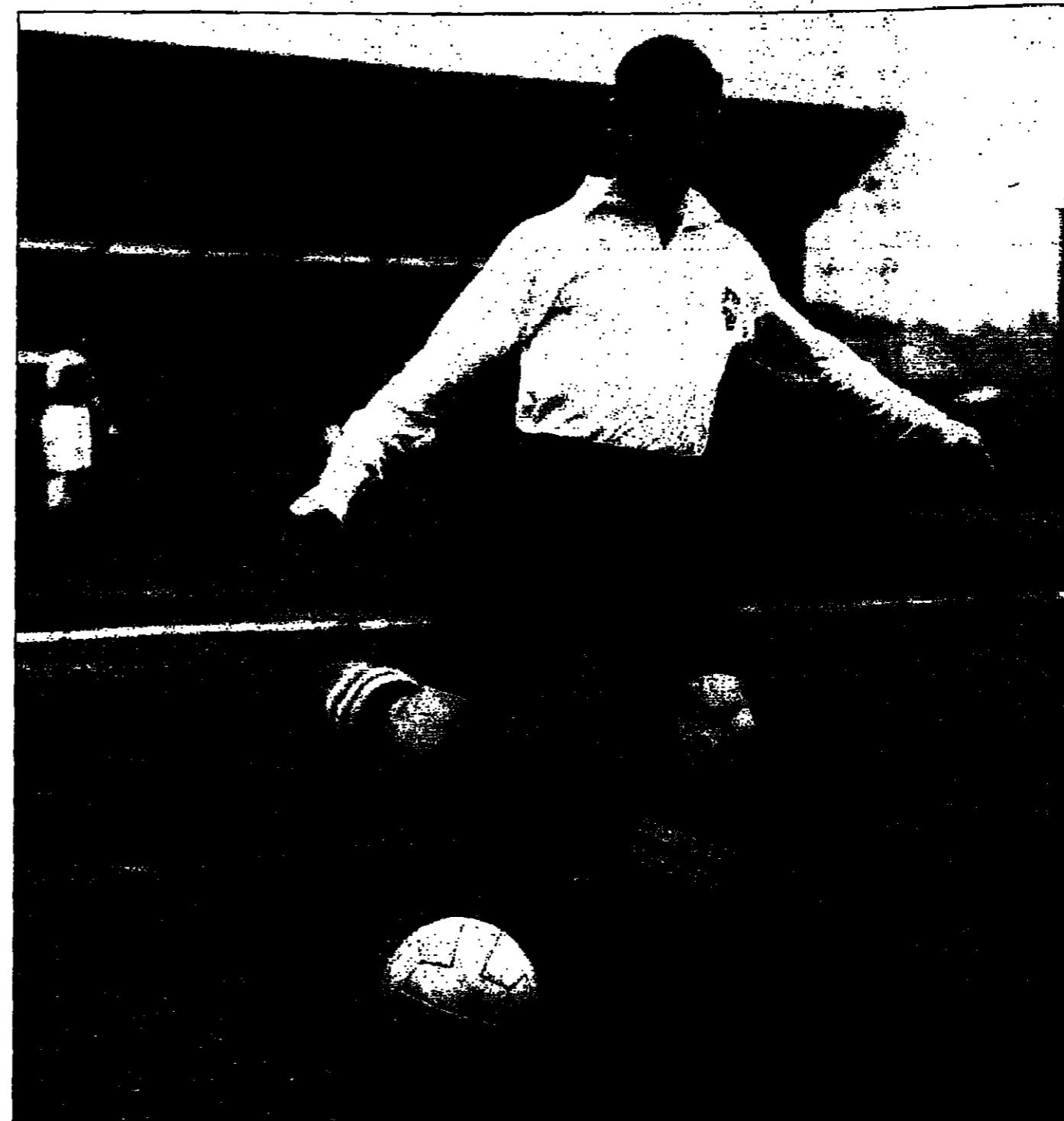
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Finney, Justice of the Peace, OBE and CBE, never had the fame that Matthews enjoyed. He has,

together with a 50-year stable marriage, everything else. "What I've been given," he said, "has been more than adequate."

And with that, with time pressing, he had to go. There were two engagements requiring his attendance: Age Concern, which has taken over a local church and for which Tom assists with keep-fit exercises for the aged, and Space, a



Finney remained with Preston throughout his career. He was regarded as the most complete forward of his generation

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Come along and see," Finney said. "You get real pleasure looking at the faces of those disabled kids when they go down the slide into a bed of softballs." The man, the lifetime, and the moving ball: no wonder he doesn't need a Porsche.

Celtic pin hopes on return of golden boy

By KEVIN McCARRA

AT A training session earlier this week, Paolo di Canio was spotted breaking in a pair of gold boots, and they are likely to be donned for the match with Aberdeen at Pittodrie this evening. The choice of footwear may testify to dandysty impulses, but the glint of precious metal will also appeal to Celtic supporters, who have been accustomed to dress of late.

Their club lags 14 points behind Rangers and, even with three games in hand, that deficit is intimidating. For that reason, the fixture today will be a test of Celtic's morale as much as a survey of their skills. In the attempt to challenge Rangers, it may be that Tommy Burns's team suffers primarily from an insufficient number of good players, but it

has also been damaged by loss of form.

Last season Celtic finished just four points adrift of Rangers in the Bell's Scottish Premier division and suffered a single defeat in their 36 matches. One almost expects to hear a catch in Burns's voice when he recalls those exploits, so fondly does he speak of the burgeoning optimism at that time.

It feels like a distant memory even if only a few months have passed. The precision of Celtic's play in that period seemed to promise an even more accomplished challenge this season. The maintenance of progress was particularly crave, given that Celtic must attempt to prevent Rangers from equalising their record of nine successive championships.

The side, uneasy with its

responsibilities, has played stuffy and the crowd has responded, as it did in the strained 1-0 win over Dundee United on Saturday, with irritation. Burns claims that the impatience of supporters only places one further barrier between themselves and the success that they seek.

The manager believes that team must become less concerned by the aesthetics of victory. "The players," Burns said, "have to get away from the idea that they must always be pretty and pass the ball. They need to work their way through matches without distracting themselves by thinking that they can play better."

Celtic should, all the same be easier on the eye this evening. Di Canio returns after suspension, while Pierre van Hooijdonk and Jackie McNamara are fit once more.

Andreas Thom, however, is doubtful with a back strain. Greater difficulties confront Aberdeen, who lost 3-0 away to Kilmarnock on Saturday, but they are one of those sides that can look more accomplished when faced with a higher calibre of opposition.

Stewart McMillane, their captain, however, is suspended.

Although Rangers are expected to defeat Raith Rovers at home this afternoon, Walter Smith, the manager, is still pained by the occasions when his side has joined the public in taking victory for granted.

Nonetheless, Rangers have a point more than at the halfway stage last season and their strength will grow. They could soon be able to field Sebastian Rozental, the young Chilean striker, whom the club has agreed to buy from Universidad Católica for £3

million. If he is granted a work permit, Rozental may be able to make his debut in late January.

Such red tape affects Hibernian's activity in the transfer market. The Edinburgh club, who face Kilmarnock at Easter Road this afternoon, have bought Brian Grant, 32, the experienced midfield player, from Aberdeen John Sillett.

Dundee United could be without Kjell Olafsson and Erik Pedersen, two of the Scandinavian signings, but Motherwell, the visitors to Tannadice, are out of form and also lacking Neil Pointon, whose suspension puts him on a substantial list of absences.

They will attempt to recover poise against a buoyant Dumfrieslins at East End Park.

You played to the rules strictly, you committed yourself totally to the club and the game and, in my case, it keeps on giving things back. I feel very proud when I look at the ground, to think that I've had a stand built in my name. It's a lifetime's ambition," he said.

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off the field
the gods

THE TIMES BOXING DAY GUIDE TO THE PREMIERSHIP

ARSENAL

Arsenal's players have had a quiet Christmas, though. They have been at their cars since and went up to their Sheffield hotel for the game against Wednesday, such as it was, on the way. The best Christmas present for their manager, Arsene Wenger, would surely be to name his England goalkeeper David Seaman again, but these ribs will not heal until well into the new year. At least Tony Adams and Patrick Vieira return from suspension.

DERBY COUNTY

Training on Christmas morning is an acknowledged downside of life as a footballer. Even by accepted standards, though, Derby's festive season was, in the words of Steve McManaman, "a mess." Very soon, they trained yesterday morning, returned home and reported to the Bassett Crosshead again for fun for the kid to Shrewsbury. Dean Marridge, the skipper, said: "Christmas is really for kids, nothing else. I'm not going to let my footballers go off on children's stuff."

MANCHESTER UNITED

The United players at least got some time off their duties yesterday. It was a short break, though, and there was no room for much indulgence. They had to train at tea-time before the flight for Nottingham on Saturday, and when they had already had to leave the plane with their luggage, Christmas dinner at the training ground last Friday, a party for the disabled the previous week — with Fred the Red standing in for Santa Claus — and visits to hospitals and an old people's home.

ASTON VILLA

Villa's players can become a bit of a drag, but Gareth Southgate, the England and Villa defender, has trouble with his team-mates running their Christmas pub yesterday, play Chelsea this afternoon, train tomorrow, and visit Arsenal on Saturday. Southgate lounges around in rather more exotic climes, where he has been sent to assist his recuperation. "I've promised to come back with too good a story," he says, smiling smugly.

EVERTON

With a long haul to Middlesbrough for the game today, Everton's Christmas Day celebrations were brief. "It's always the same for footballers," Joe Royle said. "The only time I can remember having a proper Christmas was when I was injured, so you lose either way." Royle's team were in for training in the afternoon yesterday before heading off to their hotel last night. The Everton staff had drinks on Christmas Eve, and then held a party

BLACKBURN ROVERS

Tony Parkes seems to have got a taste for this management business. Not content with meeting the media at four matches over Christmas, he invited Fleet Street's finest for a press conference — on Christmas Day. Jean, the cook, had even prepared some special mince pies. Yes, it was business as usual for Blackburn yesterday. "We will be here, even if you lot aren't," Parkes said. A visit from Newcastle United on Boxing Day tends to have that sobering effect.

LEEDS UNITED

Leeds may be at home this afternoon, but, even so, the players' time with their families yesterday was curtailed. The players had lunch at home, but then trained at tea-time and spent last night in a hotel — although there were no reports of games of Scrabble or carpet bowls to occupy the evening, as in the days of Don Revie. Still, they had had a long weekend, with Monday off to help with the shopping. The players' Christmas lunch had been held last week.

MIDDLESBROUGH

Bryan Robson has ordered his entire squad to stay away from the club until lunchtime today when they are scheduled to congregate before their home date with Everton. Robson, who claimed injury and illness to 23 players forced him to call off the game against Blackpool last Saturday, has experienced the sort of results sequence that would have had many managers reaching for their P&Es and many observers already wondering if he is losing his moorings at the Riverside.

CHESLSEA

Some years ago, Chelsea used a well-known amateur international winger who was paid, unofficially, £20 a game — then the amount of the maximum wage. That means that at Christmas and Easter, when three games regularly took place, the amateur pocketed three times as much as the professionals. Chelsea's three Italian players have not been home yet for the festivities. Vialli's recovery from injury will, leave Gullit with an embarrassment of riches for the match at Villa Park.

DM

LEICESTER CITY

In Sweden, Father Christmas arrives a day earlier than in England. Thus, Pontus Kaamark made a quick trip back to his home in Gothenburg two days ago, returning in time for a second meeting with Santa Claus yesterday. "This way I get two lots of presents," he joked. Kaamark, who made his first starring appearance for 13 months last Saturday, will miss one Swedish tradition. "While you have your Queen's Speech on Christmas Day, we always watch cartoons."

RH

COVENTRY CITY

Not much Christmas cheer for Coventry's players yesterday. The lads just about had time for the ritual opening of presents before it was off to the training ground, a vigorous clearing of lungs and then a coach trip north for an overnight stay in a hotel. Leeds United away, this afternoon, is hardly the most festive Boxing Day fixture. At least Graham Hooper, the City secretary, was still able to play happy families. "Fortunately, it's not compulsory for secretaries to travel," he gloated.

RK

LIVERPOOL

Horror of horrors, the legendary players' Christmas party has been postponed until the new year because of the sheer pressure of fixtures. So no bizarre sights around Liverpool city centre as the entire team goes on a pub crawl in fancy dress. No Robbie Fowler as Elvis, Peter Beardsley as Quasimodo (it's true), no John Barnes as a member of the Ku Klux Klan. Liverpool have the heaviest programme of all the top teams, and they will not get a day off over the whole festive period.

DM

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY

It will be lonely this Christmas, as the old Mum song went, and that certainly could be the case for Benito Carbone. He is still staying in a Sheffield hotel before finding a house in the area, and is facing the prospect of spending the festive season alone and then lunch sitting in a starkly clean empty dining room. But help is at hand. David Pleat has extended an invitation of his own to the recent signing of the international, as long as he brings along some fine wines from Italy.

DM

SUNDERLAND

Peter Reid is proposing changes for the meeting with Derby County at Roker Park today in the aftermath of the trashing at Manchester United. Ominously, United countered Reid's tactics by using Gary Neville first to talk Michael Gray, and then Alex Rae. Sunderland's already-limited creativity was thus negated at space and if other sides follow suit it could be a truly tricky 1997. One definitely innovative Roker player, Michael Bridges, may well start today.

HOW THEY STAND

P	Goals	Last five
Wins	Draws	Losses
19	38	+18
2	Arsenal	WWWD
3	Wimbledon	DWWL
4	Aston Villa	WWW
5	Manchester Utd	DWWD
6	Newcastle	DLDL
7	Everton	MLWD
8	Sheffield Wed	DLDW
9	Tottenham	LLWD
10	Leeds	DWL
11	Sunderland	DWLW
12	West Ham	DLLW
13	Southampton	LLLW
14	Cov	LLWW
15	Middlesbrough	DLDD
16	Derby	DOWL
17	Nottingham Forest	DLDW

WEST HAM UNITED

Although training yesterday for the noon visit to Wimbledon today, the Hammers have, as usual, been donning fancy dress for visits to local schools and hospitals. But their fame has spread; they returned on Monday from a special Christmas coaching clinic for kids up the A12 at Shenfield only to get a request for a similar venture ... from Cornwall. Ilie Dumitrescu, meanwhile, looks likely to get his Christmas wish — a transfer to America Cuidad, in Mexico.

Reports: Brian Glanville, Peter Bell, Russell Kempson, Richard Hobson, Louise Taylor, Nick Szczepanik, Keith Pike, David Maddock, Statistics: Julian Desborough

WIMBLEDON

The 5-0 termination of a 19-match unbeaten run, which prompted a long talk in the Villa Park dressing-room, was, according to Joe Kinnear, a mere blip. "I'm not going to over-react," he said. "The trick is to bounce back." The home match with West Ham will be an early opportunity, for which the players trained yesterday morning. "It gives you a bit of room for the old Christmas pud to go down," Robbie Earle said, "but football is what we get paid for and we know we have to do a job."

NS

LEEDS UNITED v COVENTRY CITY

TICKETS: seats available
10-YEAR RECORD: -, -, -, 2-0, 2-2, 1-0, 3-0, 1-1

NOTTINGHAM FOREST

TICKETS: sold out
10-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, 0-0, 1-1, 1-1, 0-0, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1

SHREWDY WEDNESDAY v ARSENAL

TICKETS: seats available
10-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, 3-2, 1-1, 1-0, 1-1, 0-0, 1-1, 0-0

NOTTINGHAM FOREST v MANCHESTER UNITED

TICKETS: sold out
10-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, 0-0, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1

BLACKBURN ROVERS v NEWCASTLE UNITED

TICKETS: sold out
10-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1

NOTTINGHAM FOREST v SOUTHERN FOREST

TICKETS: sold out
10-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1

NOTTINGHAM FOREST v MANCHESTER UNITED

TICKETS: sold out
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NOTTINGHAM FOREST v MANCHESTER UNITED

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10-YEAR RECORD: 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1, 1-1

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NOTTINGHAM FOREST v MANCHESTER UNITED

Old and smelly but worth a small fortune



Anyone who found a bright new pair of the latest sports shoes among their Christmas presents yesterday should think twice before chucking that old pair in the bin. They could be throwing away a fortune.

Amazingly, there are people out there who will pay good money for those crusty, old, worn-down, second-hand trainers — the older and rarer the better. There is a flourishing international market in them, with the highest prices being paid in Japan, where the height of fashion among the young is to be seen in classic sports shoes of the past.

I was alerted to my potential good fortune by an advertisement in the American edition of *Runner's World* that said: "Wanted: vintage running shoes. Up to \$1,000 cash paid."

I couldn't believe it. Cash paid for old running shoes? Was it possible that long-term compulsive exercisers like me could be living with uncovered riches boxed away in the loft?

Perhaps I should first make a confession. I am the Imelda Marcos of the training shoe. I reckon to have the biggest collection of used running shoes in private hands. For years, if there was a new model on the market, I was first in line to buy it. For a while, I was even given free shoes by some of the manufacturers, which swelled my collection no end.

I would go anywhere to try on anything in search of the perfect running shoe. Waffles, studs, spikes, air bubbles, pronation plugs — been there, worn that. The best pair of running shoes, the nearest thing to perfection with laces, was always going to be the next pair that I bought. I scoured foreign magazines in search of fresh, mouthwatering models, and even managed to get my feet into some unlikely prototypes that never went into production.

It would be far too painful to try to calculate what this addiction has cost me over the years. Even a spell of coaching the barefoot runner, Zola Budd, failed to cure me of my compulsion to buy and my belief in the magic powers of the cobbler. Zola may not have needed the benefit of shoes to run like a dream, but I certainly did.

My shoes, laced into my life, exist still, some like silent slugs on



Bryant, the Imelda Marcos of running shoes, poses with his impressive, and still growing, collection of second-hand trainers

view around my home, others hidden away in vast cardboard boxes. Many caked with mud and down at heel, a few, bought in haste, hardly touched. I can never throw any of them away. They bring back too many memories — happy and painful. They are a testament to countless nights and days lost pounding parks and tracks in search of the perfect run, the perfect race, in the perfect pair of shoes.

Now, however, prices of second-hand sports shoes have never been higher, especially in Tokyo and Paris, where teenagers are snapping up recycled Reeboks, Adidas, Puma, Converse and, especially, Nike shoes in record numbers.

The reason for the craze is said to be the shoes worn by Tom Hanks's character in *Forrest Gump*. Nike shoes from around 1970, like those he wears in the film, now have

a street value of between \$200 and \$300. If you have old Nikes of this or any other era squirrelled away, you could be in the money, because Nike has now joined that exclusive club of brand names that the Japanese find irresistible.

Many working Japanese in their late teens and twenties have high incomes but still live with their parents. They have plenty of money to spend on designer luxuries and sales of Nikes (old and new) are booming. Sales of the brand increased more than 40 per cent there last year to \$300 million, making Japan the company's second largest market, after the United States.

While the young snap up vintage shoes to wear as a cult fashion item, paying typically \$1,000 for a pair of Nike Air Max Yellows, their parents are buying them as antiques to be put

on display in their home. In the United States, a sub-culture of dealers and buyers, advertising in magazines and on the Internet, has sprung up to cater for the market in what they term "retro-sneaker fetishism".

"We want your used athletic shoes.

The older the better," pleads Second Chance Sports, of New Hampshire. "I collect Nike, Reeboks and Asics shoes." Curt Crane, of Pittsburgh, announces on the Internet, "I don't care what size, age or shape they are in. Let me know what you have and I'll make you an offer on it."

Mike St Laurent is a shoe lover who both trades and collects vintage trainers. "Any old or bizarre-style running shoes are being bought up for more than the original selling price," he said. "Waffle trainers, Tailwinds, Elites, Oregon Waffles, Internationalists ... some sell in the hundreds of dollars. Most shoes I run

across only fetch around 50 bucks, but that's better than being left in a closet to rot."

St Laurent, who used to work for Nike, New Balance and Saucony, talks enthusiastically of parties of Japanese businessmen who fly into Seattle to buy up used trainers in bulk, and of weekly auctions of rare vintages that are conducted on the Internet.

But not everything is for sale. Like any true collector, St Laurent is loath to part with his own treasured archive, whatever the price. I know the feeling. My own beaten-up collection is full of footprints of the past, and it is painful to think of selling them on to strange new feet. I fear the collection will continue to grow.

And, of course, I had this great new pair of Asics for Christmas...

JOHN BRYANT

RUGBY UNION: ADVENT OF PROFESSIONAL GAME HAS HELPED TO KILL OFF TRADITIONAL BOXING DAY FIXTURES

De Glanville fit to lead Bath at Sale

PHIL de Glanville, the Bath and England captain, returns from injury to lead his club in their Courage Clubs Championship match away to Sale on Sunday. De Glanville, who replaces Matt Perry in the centre, has recovered from the thigh strain that prevented him from playing in the international against Argentina earlier this month as well as in Bath's Pilkington Cup defeat of London Irish last weekend.

Moseley, the second division side, could escape punishment for fielding an unregistered player in their defeat away to Bedford last month. Moseley thought that they would have two points deducted when they discovered that Andy Freke, their lock, was still registered with Woodrush, his first club, but English Professional Rugby Union Club (EPRU), which organises the league, has now told Moseley they it does not intend to punish them for a what appears to be genuine mistake.

SNOOKER

Resignations leave WPBSA in turmoil

THE struggle to control snooker was further confused this week when Jimmy Chambers and Terry Griffiths resigned from the board of the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association (WPBSA), the game's governing body.

Chambers, 39, a Walsall snooker club owner, had not been due to stand for re-election for another year, having taken his seat only 12 months ago. In a brief statement, however, he said: "I've been concerned for some time with the direction being taken by the present board and because of this I felt I had no option but to resign."

The decisions, effective from January 23, will be welcomed by opponents of the WPBSA, especially Ian Doyle, a leading

though, may choose to play golf. Never before on this day has such a choice to be made. For strange reasons — primarily the overriding importance of league success — there is no ridge today.

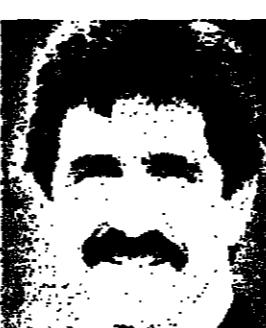
This is new. There may have been decisions to be made in the past, but only so far as which rugby club to visit; which fixture was the most appealing.

Today, no invading host from Pontypridd will travel along the Taff to prove a provincial point against the fancy-dans of Cardiff: Maesteg will not come down the Lynfi Valley to settle old scores with their player-pinch-neighbours, Bridgend; nor will rivalries be inflamed as they used to be when Aberavon played Neath. Clubs did not mind travelling provided that the boundaries they crossed were only local ones. And the season's good-will was not universally guaranteed.

It was no different elsewhere. Gala played Melrose, Redruth went to Camborne, Bath might play Clifton. On the other hand, the coast of Pembrokeshire beckons. There is much to see. Friends

were invited to the frost. This was

GERALD DAVIES



Rugby Union Commentary

the pattern clear. There was one oddity. Watsonians, for some obscure reason, inexplicably thought it worth their while to come from Scotland to play Newport and Cardiff over this festive period. It was not the advent of a formal league structure that put paid to this fixture but rather the likely loss of revenue.

The match was forever in danger of being cancelled because of the frost. This was

decision, with pitch inspections and agonised debates, was always presented as a hard one to call. The Watsonians had arrived; a financial guarantee had been made. The treasurer's need to forward the books had to be balanced against the players' safety. Even in those amateur days, this was no contest. The bottom line mattered.

Players will not crouch their teeth nor will applaud thunder from the terraces this afternoon. The scoreboard will remain idle, the voices of exclaimable schoolboys, glowing with yesterday's gifts, will be still. There will be no cheers and handshaking.

There will be no sound of teacups or theinkle of glasses in the Carwyn James room in Stradey Park while at Cardiff Athletic Club the framed portraits on the wall of noted club men, Bleddyn Williams, Will Wooller, the late Les Spence and the rest, will look down upon a tidy uncluttered bar room, and an unknown silence. They, in their playing time, will always have known a Boxing Day fixture, as, until today, everyone else did. The day's rhythms have altered.

And there will be no need to prompt the singing of Christmas carols as the old stalwart, the late Stan Bowes, did. Blue and black to his Cardiff core, the former irascible prop forward paraded the touchline and stimulated the crowd to join in. The spirit was jocular and infectious. The match mattered, but not too much — at least, not until the whistle blew.

To appreciate the full flavour of a Boxing Day game, nowhere proved better than at Llanelli. London Welsh were the visitors. The crowd was packed to bursting: no extra shilling could get you in. The match brought everyone together from far and wide, but the game itself was hardly the main point. It was the occasion for the recycling of old and familiar tales.

"Wel, shawd i ti 'slawer dyd" would be the hale-fellow greeting that would solicit a dozen anecdotes in the language that feels more at home in this club than any other and with which the expatriates could grow familiar once more. It was a homecoming of sorts; the day's gathering of the tribes.

Students and doctors would be there, teachers and lawyers, too; those who had founded their business on land in London, and all those others who preferred to be discreet and not to give too much away about what they were up to in "the smoke", gathered for gossip and an annual dose of nostalgia. Much like the Middlesex Seven, it was a pilgrimage. If the Twickenham event has seen better days, Stratford's moment has vanished already into golden memory.

What was important, the renewing of ties and friendship, remains important, but it can no longer be accommodated in the same way. Rugby is more serious and realistic nowadays. It is the fascination with the struggle that matters, the spoils of battle that count.

Players, after all, who are asked to perform after the somnolent day before, may not have seen the funny side of Boxing Day rugby in the way the cigar-puffing crowd always did. So, in these stern times, we have to let go of some of the fun. Which is another symptom of a changing sport.

BASKETBALL

Jordan's bullish form sustains winning run

MICHAEL JORDAN and Scottie Pippen combined for 20 points in a second-quarter run as Chicago Bulls rebounded from a 16-point first-quarter deficit to trounce New Jersey Nets 115-81.

Jordan had 12 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists. Pippen had 10 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists.

For the Bucks, the winners of five of their past seven outings, Hakeem Olajuwon scored 37 points for Houston.

At Minnesota, Stephon Marbury, the rookie, scored a season-high 33 points as Minnesota Timberwolves brought down Utah Jazz, 107-98.

Terry Porter added 20 points for the Timberwolves, who have beaten

the Bucks, who have beaten the Western Conference teams, Los Angeles and Utah, consecutively after losing three in a row. Minnesota became the first team in 13 games to reach 100 points against Utah.

In Houston, Sherman Douglas scored eight of his 19 points in the first quarter as Milwaukee Bucks took the lead midway through the period and never trailed, handing Houston Rockets their fourth straight defeat, 81-76.

Vin Baker scored 17 points and Ray Allen added 16 points

for the Bucks, the winners of five of their past seven outings. Hakeem Olajuwon scored 37 points for Houston.

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Terry Porter added 20 points for the Timberwolves, who have beaten the Western Conference teams, Los Angeles and Utah, consecutively after losing three in a row. Minnesota became the first team in 13 games to reach 100 points against Utah.

In New York, Patrick Ewing scored 12 of his 17 points in the second half as New York Knicks used a 9-run run to break a tie and go on to win their third straight game, 82-76 over the Atlanta Hawks.

Pippen's rudders, deck fittings and sails were damaged.

Feeling festive motoring along far from home

Lucy Duncan has too much time to spare for eating and sleeping on board *Concert*

I had always known that Christmas this year would be different, but I wasn't planning on it being this different.

We are now six days into our "life without a mast" and-under motor aboard the *IT Global Challenge* yacht, *Concert*, and have got quite used to our new routine in the Southern Ocean en route to Wellington. The pace of life is very different now that we are no longer racing. At the most, only two people are needed on the deck at any one time, so watch times have been cut in half and we have a lot more spare time.

In fact, we now have so much spare time that, instead of being in a permanent state of sleep deprivation, we are now all grossly oversleep — it's quite difficult to get out of the habit of going to bed at every possible opportunity.

Christmas has certainly not missed us out in the depths of the Southern Ocean. The boat is plastered in Christmas decorations and an inflatable Santa is more likely to be found at the helm than anyone else.

We are also doing our best to continue the Christmas tradition of overeating — meal-times are a highlight, being one of the few fixed points in the day. Previously we had the excuse that we were burning up calories keeping warm and exercising. We are now above 50 degrees south, it's not cold and we're certainly not exercising as much as we were. However, this doesn't seem to stop us eating huge portions and enjoying them.

Our latest fueling rendezvous, this time with *Courtaulds International*, provided another excuse to indulge in gluttony. As well as jerry cans full of fuel, they sent us enough chocolate to keep us going until February.

ay — not that we intend being out here that long.

As a crew, we have had our highs and lows. The lowest point was when, in order to meet up with *Time and Tide* for more fuel, we had to motor several hours in the wrong direction.

That was a bit much and a tough test for even the most sunny-natured crew member. However, all that was forgotten as they came in sight to remind us again that we are definitely not alone out here. The response of the other crews and messages of support have been quite overwhelming and definitely contribute to making this a memorable adventure.

After all, we may temporarily be out of the race, but we are certainly still having an adventure and undergoing more of a challenge than we had ever anticipated.

Christmas Day at home starts almost as I write this. With little else to occupy ourselves, we plan at least a 37-hour Christmas Day to cover British and New Zealand time. Our target is to reach the chart that includes

New Zealand by the end of Christmas (we have about half an inch to go, or approximately 70 miles). We will then have less than 900 miles to go to the Chatham Islands.

Christmas lunch is planned — salt pork and Christmas pudding with the last of our custard supplies stashed away in readiness.

Finally, we have our Christmas carol tape played through the deck speakers. They have only just been allowed out of the bag (not for us the interminable build-up for Christmas beginning in September), and can have no better setting than a moonlit night in the middle of one of the last truly isolated places on earth.

SAILING

New mast may slow German bid

THE German maxi, *Morning Glory*, was back in contention in the Sydney to Hobart ocean racing classic after crew members toiled to fit a replacement mast. They had the 110ft carbon fibre spar in place less than 11 hours after it was airlifted from Auckland to Sydney and taken on a crane-equipped barge to a harbour-side rigger's yard.

The previous mast snapped high up during the 80ft sloop's first training run for the 620-mile race, which is due to start with a field of around 95 boats.

Asked if he would be able to push *Morning Glory* to the limit with the replacement mast if conditions got tough, Barry McKay, the skipper, said: "No, probably not. We'll be backing off a little earlier than normal, I guess."

Morning Glory is second favourite for line honours behind the speedy Australian maxi, *Brindabella*. The Hong Kong-based yacht, *Exile*, is also expected to do well.

Race leaders should sail into Hobart before dawn on Sunday. To break the 21-year-old race record, the winner will have to arrive in less than 2 days 14hr 36min 50sec.

A whale-spotter aircraft will overfly the route to help yachts to avoid collisions.

The accidents can seriously damage boats and injure or kill the whales involved.

Gerard Early, an acting director of Wildlife Australia, the Australian government agency, said: "Collisions with whales occur when the whales are surprised by fast-moving vessels which are making less noise than the surrounding water."

Yves Parlier, the lone French sailor, limped into Fremantle, Western Australia, on Tuesday on his stricken yacht, *Aquitaine Innovations*, after a collision with an iceberg during the Vendee Globe race. He was fit and in good spirits, but angry that the collision in the Southern Ocean 19 days ago had forced him out of the single-handed round-the-world event, in which he was the favourite. Parlier's rudders, deck fittings and sails were damaged.

FOR THE RECORD

SCOTTISH INDOOR CUP: Preliminary round. Perth 1, 6-5; Edinburgh 1, Glasgow University

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Simon Barnes continues a review by Times writers of 1996's sporting highlights

Johnson's flash of sanity amid the madness



The fourth part of the Douglas Adams *Hitch-Hiker* trilogy, *So Long, And Thanks For All The Fish*, includes a character called Wonko the Sane. Wonko's house is inside out: the external walls bear pictures and bookshelves, the inside contains guttering, a garden path, a couple of small trees. "Here," Wonko the Sane said, "we are outside the Asylum." He pointed again at the rough brickwork, the pointing, the guttering. "Go through that door," he pointed at the door through which they had originally entered, "and you go into the Asylum. I've tried to decorate it nicely to keep the inmates happy, but there's very little one can do. I never go in there now myself."

Locked up inside the vastness of the Earth, the world is mad; outside it all in his own little abode, the hermit is sane.

Atlanta was a madhouse, all right. The Olympic Games organising committee cleverly pretended that the complaints were simply a few "whining foreign journalists"; but it was the competitors who really suffered from appalling transport, dreadful accommodation — even worse food.

The bomb, which killed one person, injured dozens and shocked millions, added a far deeper layer of insanity to the mad city. And death stalked the streets and handed *carte blanche* to the swaggering red-neck security men who were as inefficient as they were obstreperous and xenophobic. It was a city of bad vibes.

And me? I had a lovely time, thanks very much. Because, every day for a week, I managed to get outside the Asylum. I found a place in Atlanta where you could escape from the woeful organisation, the morbid self-righteousness and the neurotic resentfulness that oppressed everyone who had anything to do with the Olympic Games.

Where was this enchanted spot, this sacred place? It was inside the stadiums, the gym halls, arenas and the courts. It was to be found at every point where the Atlanta organising committee handed



Johnson, wearing his golden shoes, breaks the tape in the 200 metres in Atlanta, setting a record time that stunned the world. Photograph: Mike Blake

over to the international sports federations. It came at the moment when the infrastructure could fade into the place where it should have been all along: the background. And we could at last turn our minds to something that had got completely lost inside the Asylum.

Sport. Competition. The best against the best against the best. Sheer, undiluted, absolutely wonderful bloody sport. Perhaps the madness in the streets even helped a little; focused our minds on the hard light of sporting sanity.

Sport may seem like a kind of madness in itself, but there are plenty of people inside the Asylum who thought that Wonko the Sane was mad. Compared with the world, or with the madness of the Atlanta streets, sport brings only the fresh air of sanity.

Now I could name any day of the post-bomb Games as my high-spot of the year; for my whole week was a series of Himalayan peaks, a family of giants, heads lost in the clouds of memory. It takes a cartographer of peculiar meticulousness to establish which of those peaks is Everest.

The week began with Donovan Bailey winning the 100 metres; as ever, the event of events. Then came Alexei Nemov making gymnastics history with his piked somersault somewhere up in the stratosphere above the high bar. Then Andrei Chermerkin, and his strutting beer-bellied victory in the super-heavyweight weightlifting.

Then — same determination, same defiance of gravity, slightly different shape — came the great Fu Mingxia, winning her second diving gold medal. And so back to the athletics stadium on Thursday night.

Perhaps you saw it on television. Television can certainly mix emotion and character and bring it to you rich and strong, but it cannot help but dilute the physical impact of what it sees. Television cannot tell you how cold and slippery is the skating rink, how the earth trembles at the passage of a Formula One motor car, how the geometry of football really works.

And it cannot make you feel how fast a man can run. It can only tell you the time, pedantically ticking away at the bottom of the screen, and then bring you the elations and despairs. It cannot bring that sense of shattered disbelief that comes when the limits of the human frame are redefined before our eyes.

I shall not forget seeing Michael Johnson run into the straight in the 200 metres. I believe at that moment that he was running faster than any man had ever run

'At that moment he was running faster than any man has ever run before'

before. It was ... well, really rather shocking, actually.

"I knew coming off the curve — you can always tell coming off the curve to the straightaway — I knew that I was running faster than I had ever run in my life." Or any one else, for that matter: in his golden shoes, with his Groucho Marx knees-down strut.

The clock told us that this was a world record, a Beowulfesque leap into the athletic impossible, but the information, 19.32 seconds and all that, was unnecessary, otiose, irrelevant. We knew; we had seen it. The number would become important, all in good time; but we were still looking at the scorchnarks in the air.

And all around me, hacks were on their feet, not to see the time, but because sitting down was emotionally impossible. And every cynical, deadline-oppressed, sulky, homesick weary one of us was grinning like a ninny and muttering awed obscenities. We all stood about, smirking and effing and blinding at each other in a collective trance of wonder: in a city of madness, a Damascus Road moment of blinding sanity.

Sport at the very, very highest level can do that; and scarcely anyone is immune. Sport has quite extraordinary power. And I had lived that Damascus Road moment every day of that extraordinary week. Every day, I had been privileged to make a brief journey outside the Asylum.

I finished my week of glories with the voluptuous beauties of dressage, and for the sixth time that week I knew perfection. The best against the best against the best: that is what the best — indeed, the only real part — of the Olympic Games is about. Sport is a mad world. But may I quote, without giving offence, the beautiful line from the Prayer Book? God, "whose service is perfect freedom".

Sport. Whose madness is perfect sanity.

TOMORROW

The day a six-stroke lead disappeared at the Masters

Test your knowledge with the Jumbo Sports Crossword

THE TIMES presents the traditional festive challenge of the Jumbo Sports Crossword to test your knowledge over the holiday period — with a Methuselah of Moët & Chandon champagne to the winner and six runners-up to receive copies of the sports book of the year.

The sender of the first correct entry drawn will receive £250 worth of champagne while *Dark Trade — Lost In Boxing*, a journey through the shadowy world of the fight game, by



Donald McRae, goes to the next six correct entries.

Compiled after five years of following renowned boxers in such diverse venues as Las Vegas and Belfast, *Dark Trade* won the

William Hill sports book of the year award. It is published by Mainstream at £14.99.

Send your completed crossword with your name, address and daytime telephone number, to:

Jumbo Sports Crossword,
Sports Department, The Times,
1, Pennington Street,
London, E1 9XN

to arrive by Friday, January 10, 1997. The Sports Editor's decision is final. Usual rules apply. No correspondence.

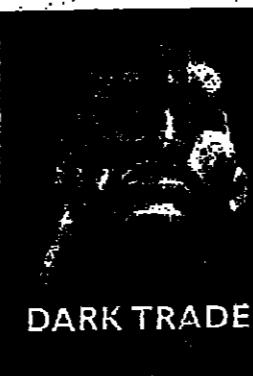


ACROSS

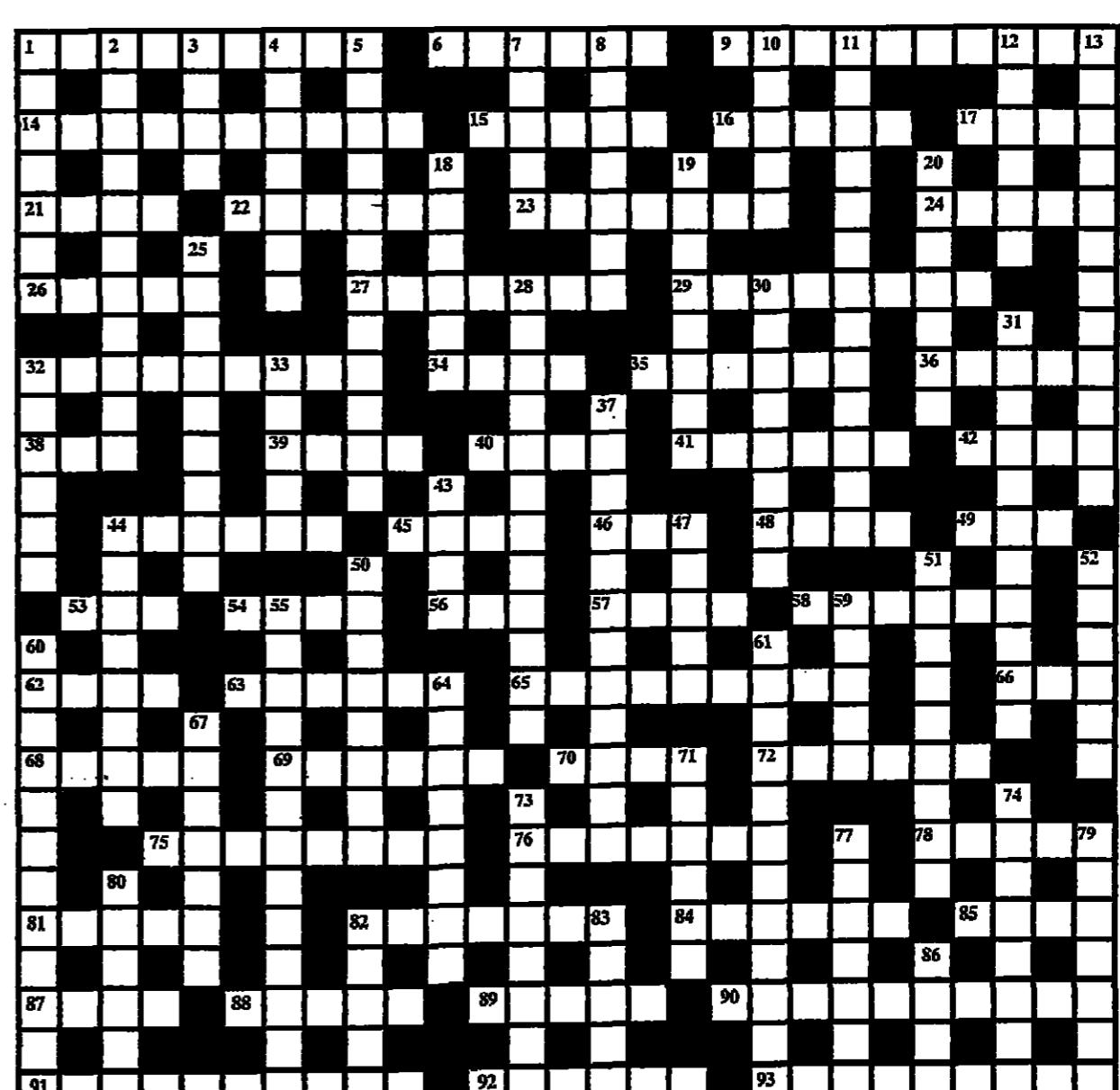
- 1 Go in cages for an adopted Scot (9).
6 A French full back who made many a strong surge (6).
9 Stick for a close fielder (4, 2, 4).
14 Surprising FA Cup winners in 1973 (10).
15 Worth an effort from Zebby (5).
16 Rowing remains? (5).
17 Marvin, who claimed the world heavyweight title (4).
21 In shape at Kennington (4).
22 He was said to be ten years ahead of the game (6).
23 Doug, who choked at St Andrews (7).
24 Transparently a pointless round (5).
26 Muhammad Ali and Herb Elliott have carried it (5).
27 First half, of course (7).
29 Football bravos — of Burslem (8).
32 Dip to avoid blow (4, 5).
34 Figuratively, a pitching iron (4).
35 Make redundant with a pass? (6).
36 On level terms (5).
38 Step it on Indianapolis (3).
39 A running one in American Football (4).
40 Depressed over a varsity award? (4).
41 Looking closely at the opposition (5).
42 Loop the loop at Cowdry Park (4).
44 Take it, hopefully, for the final stroke (6).
45 Is it set on a golf course? (4).
46 Bartram or Snead, for instance (3).
48 Mark and Gary, who were a twin threat with the Wallabies (4).
49 Weight at which Walter McGowan was world champion (3).

- 53 Tool of Hendry's trade (3).
54 Blemish in the penalty area (4).
56 It means nothing in football (3).
57 Moans about the horses? (4).
58 Viva on for the Russian who settled to three Olympic golds (5).
62 Dol changes in the swimming venue (4).
63 Tie of sorts for footballers and boxers (4, 2).
65 Remove the opposition (9).
66 Hit-and-miss golf shot (3).
67 Ben, the golfer who followed the sun (3).
69 Strikers cannot stand missing a chance like this (6).
70 They are at home at Bowthorpe Park (4).
72 New followed Gus as a rugby league master (6).
75 Ball bounces back into play (8).
76 Lifes tennis shot and thumps uncouth chap! (4, 3).
78 Liz and Ted, who made the grade as showjumpers (5).
81 Team ... captained by Azharuddin (5).
82 The 1968 Olympic heavyweight champion still answering the bell (7).

- 1 Centre of attraction for Bath and England (7).
2 New activity for the sabbath (6, 5).
3 Major event that is often close (4).
4 Onlookers who regard golf as an art form perhaps (7).
5 Bowler who had a bond with Australia, not Anfield (5, 7).
7 Sporting embers (5).
8 What Len Shackleton did just for laughs (7).
10 Bet Joe, or possibly Steve, was the greatest (5).
11 Manchester United and Newcastle hope to be in one this season (8, 5).
12 Red ale for the one in front (6).
13 Man of 1,000 games and 125 caps (5, 7).
18 Gate opens for football in Bristol (6).
19 Produce a winning card on court? (5, 3).
20 Tactics through the grass (7).
25 Strokes to the green by Beck? (4, 5).
28 He had an army of followers (6, 6).
30 One loser for the bowler's first ball (8).



Six runners-up win *Dark Trade — Lost in Boxing*



COMPILATION BY NORMAN GILLER

NAME:
ADDRESS:
DAYTIME TELEPHONE:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93

RACING: NORTHERN-TRAINED GREY IMPOSSIBLE TO OPPOSE IN SUBSTANDARD KEMPTON FIELD WITH CONDITIONS IN HIS FAVOUR



Strong Promise, who could prove the main danger to One Man in the Pertemps King George VI Chase at Kempton today, brushes through the birch in clearing one of Cheltenham's stiff fences. Photograph: Hugh Routledge

One Man on fast track to King George double

By RICHARD EVANS
RACING CORRESPONDENT

ONE MAN, close to invincible over fences on flat courses, is impossible to oppose around Kempton Park this afternoon as he attempts to win his second successive Pertemps King George VI Chase.

The Gordon Richards-trained grey has suffered only defeats in completed starts since being sent chasing three years ago and both have come at the Cheltenham Festival where the undulations of Prestbury Park brought about his downfall.

However, today's conditions are perfect for the highest-rated chaser in training as he takes on a field of largely substandard rivals, many of whom will not appreciate the fast going and tight turns at the Sunbury track.

Rough Quest, winner of the Racing Post Chase at the

course last February, finished ahead of One Man in the Cheltenham Gold Cup, when chasing home Imperial Call, before winning the Grand National at Aintree. However,

Barton Bank, beaten by One Man last time at Wetherby, is not the force of old; Coulant Be Better is not good enough; Mr Mulligan and Naithen Lad, the leading staying novices last year, have not enjoyed ideal preparations while Trying Again, a course specialist, needs softer ground.

If eight runners line up, Strong Promise would make some each-way appeal as Geoff Hubbard's progressive youngster should improve on his first attempt at three miles and goes well on the prevailing ground. However, realistically he has only place prospects behind One Man.

Given his cramped odds, punters will look elsewhere for

value wagers and the last race at Kempton (3.15) offers the best bet on the card.

Pearcewood, twice a winner over course and distance, did not take to fences last term but

showed all his old sparkle over the small obstacles at Cheltenham eight weeks ago behind Courbaril and the subsequent winners, Freddie Muck and Blaze Away. Mick Channon's

runner has won off a handicap mark 1lb higher than today's and looks to have solid claims.

At Huntingdon, Eastern River (1.30) is still well handicapped and the Tim Forster-trained chaser, just pipped by Lord Of The West at Worcester last time, can supplement an earlier success at Warwick. Flying Gunner (2.00) is suited by a test of stamina and the David Nicholson-trained horse will appreciate the step up to 3½ miles.

Cool Characters (Hereford, 3.05) ran particularly well from out of the handicap at Taunton two weeks ago when chasing home Call Me River and can go one better in this weak handicap.

Call It A Day (Wetherby, 2.15) where the form is strong, can enhance her strike rate. The comfortable hurdles at Wincanton and Taunton, she finished a good second to Hay Dance on his handicap debut last month and, with the winner of that race successful again at Hereford last Friday, the form looks solid.

The hurdling experience of Denham Hill (3.05) could give Charlie Mann's runner the edge over Burn Out, a useful bumper horse last season. The selection was runner-up to Mighty Moss at Worcester before finishing a good fourth to Forest Ivory.

seasonal reappearance behind Parsons Boy at Carlisle. He disappointed at Worcester last time but should be forgiven at that lapse and can come into his own over this trip.

Venetia Williams is enjoying a terrific season with 18 winners from just 41 runners and Rosencrantz (1.35) can enhance her strike rate. The comfortable hurdles at Wincanton and Taunton, she finished a good second to Hay Dance on his handicap debut last month and, with the winner of that race successful again at Hereford last Friday, the form looks solid.

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Casey: decided ground is suitable for Rough Quest

COMPREHENSIVE FORM GUIDE TO THE EIGHT CONTENDERS

BARTON BANK

Nov 16, Cheltenham, good to firm, see Strong Promise.

Nov 2, Wetherby, good, see One Man.

Apr 27, Sandown, good to firm; (11-9) 17th to Life Of A Lord (11-10) 13m 5f 110yd, grade II handicap chase, £57,800, 17 run.

May 14, Cheltenham, good, see Rough Quest.

Jun 6, Sandown, good to soft, see One Man.

COULDNT BE BETTER

Nov 30, Newbury, good; (11-10) 7th to Come Home (10-0) 3m 2f, 110yd, grade II handicap chase, £48,283, 11 run.

Nov 20, Haydock, good; (11-12) 4th, 2nd to Unruly Miss (11-0) 3m handicap chase, £10,036, 4 run.

Apr 20, Ayr, soft; (10-2) pulled up before 4 out, beaten by 10 lengths, Badger (10-2), 11th, grade II handicap chase, £28,591, 20 run.

May 14, Cheltenham, good, see Rough Quest.

M'R MULLIGAN

Dec 7, Cheltenham, good to soft, see Trying Again.

May 17, Cheltenham, good to soft, see Naithen Lad.

Feb 14, Ascot, good to soft; (11-12) beat Naithen Lad (11-5) 15m 5f 110yd, grade II novice chase, £25,650, 10 run.

NAITHEN LAD

Dec 18, Bangor, good; (11-10) 26th to Freddie Muck (11-0) 3m, handicap hurdle, £24,765, 7 run.

Mar 13, Cheltenham, good to soft; (11-4) beat Mr Mulligan (11-4) 8th (3m 1f, grade I novice chase, £25,673, 12 run).

Feb 14, Ascot, good to soft; see Mr Mulligan.

ROUGH QUEST

Dec 17, Folkestone, good to soft; (10-12) beat Destri d'Estival (10-12) 4th (2m 4f 110yd, novice hurdle, £22,805, 14 run).

Mar 31, Cheltenham, good to soft; Encore Un Peu (11-1) 13th, 2nd to 10 others, 110yd, novice handicap chase, £14,522, 27 run.

Apr 14, Cheltenham, good; (12-0) 2nd to Imperial colt (12-0) with Couldnt Be Better (12-0) 19th, Barton Bank (12-0) 31st and One Man (12-0) neck, 6th (3m 2f 110yd, grade II chase, £23,733, 3 run).

STRONG PROMISE

Nov 23, Ascot, good to firm; (10-8) beat Major Bell (11-1) 4th (2m 3f 110yd, grade II limited handicap chase, £25,985, 8 run).

Nov 16, Cheltenham, good to firm; (10-0) head 2nd to Challenger Du Luc (10-2) with Barton Bank (11-1) 23rd, 12 run.

Oct 31, Cheltenham, good to soft; (11-10) beat Morrissey Le Chien (11-10) 14th with Barton Bank (11-1) pulled before 2 out (3m 110yd, grade II chase, £23,835, 11 run).

TRYING AGAIN

Dec 7, Cheltenham, good to soft; (11-1) 11th 2nd to Lord Of The West (10-8) with Mr Mulligan (10-12) 4th (3m 1f 110yd, novice handicap chase, £26,522, 7 run).

Nov 20, Kempton good to soft; (11-3) beat Old Bridge (10-9), 7th (2m 4f 110yd, novice handicap chase, £24,562, 3 run).

Apr 17, Cheltenham, good to soft; (11-1) beat Air Strike (11-1) 4th (2m 5f novice chase, £3,602, 7 run).

Mar 21, Wincanton, good to soft; (12-3) beat Mr Mulligan (11-1) 1st (2m 5f novice chase, £3,602, 7 run).

Oct 27, Cheltenham, good to soft; (11-1) 1st (2m 5f novice chase, £3,602, 7 run).

Selection: ONE MAN (nap)

Meetings fall as frost bites into fixture list

THE meetings scheduled for Ayr, Newton Abbot and Wincanton today were abandoned yesterday. At Ayr, officials walked the course during the morning and found it frozen. With the forecast of another sharp frost in Scotland last night, they had no alternative but to call off the meeting.

Newton Abbot also fell to a morning inspection. Pat Masterson, the course clerk, said yesterday: "The course was raceable this morning. The temperature is 4C with some cloud, but -1C to -3C is forecast for tonight, so we had to call off the meeting."

Market Rasen have an inspection at 8.30am. Charlie Moore, the course clerk, said yesterday: "The course was raceable this morning. The temperature is 4C with some cloud, but -1C to -3C is forecast for tonight, so we had to abandon."

At Wincanton, officials delayed until mid-afternoon for calling the meeting off. The course was frozen.

Four tracks, Hereford, Huntingdon, Sedgefield and Market Rasen, depend on inspections today. Hereford inspect at 7.30am, with the clerk of the course, John Williams, looking for an improvement in conditions. "We couldn't have raced today but it is sunny so it depends on the weather tonight," he said.

Market Rasen have an inspection at 8.30am. Charlie Moore, the course clerk, said yesterday: "The course was raceable this morning. The temperature is 4C with some cloud, but -1C to -3C is forecast for tonight, so we had to abandon."

At Wincanton, officials delayed until mid-afternoon for calling the meeting off. The course was frozen.

Aardwolf's turn of foot should prove decisive

KEMPTON PARK

CHANNEL 4

1.10 See More Business beat Buckhouse Bay at Chepstow before finishing an excellent second to Dorans Pride in a grade one race at Fairyhouse, which makes Paul Nicholls's runner at

four furlongs a certainty. Trainer, 4yo and

jockey, 4yo. Selection: Aardwolf.

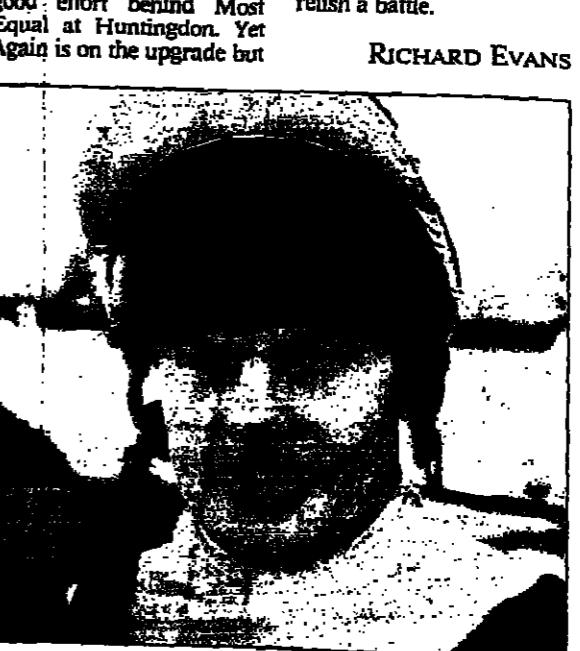
TODAY'S RACES ON TELEVISION

probably too far out of the handicap.

2.15: see above.

2.45: The finishing speed of Potter's Bay could prove decisive here. The seven-year-old showed a priceless ability to quicken away from rivals in the closing stages when winning at Cheltenham and Sandown and David Nicholson's runner should be able to maintain his unbeaten record at the main racecourse of Mister Drum. Despite winning two out of his three starts, Mark Wilkinson's chaser has shown a tendency to run down some of his fences, while Greenback jumps to the left. Sublime Fellow is far from genuine and may not relish a baffle.

RICHARD EVANS



KEMPTON PARK

THUNDERER

12/40 Sammartino 2.15 One Man 2.45 Mister Drum 3.15 PEATSWOOD (nap)

The Times Private Handicapper's top rating: 2.15 ONE MAN.

Our Newmarket Correspondent: 1.40 ALEMBIC (nap).

5696 GOOD TOTE JACKPOT MEETING

12/40 GOOD JOBS NOVICES HURDLE

12/23 2m 113 runners

11111 KALASH 40 G/F/G 1m Cheltenham M Fox 11-10

0-2 11111 COUGAR 21 10/10 1m 100yds 11-10

0-2 11111 RICHARD FLUTTER 22 11/10 1m 100yds 11-10

LEADING SPHERE 22 11/10 1m 100yds 11-10

0-2 11111 PEGGY SPRINGS 22 10/10 1m 100yds 11-10

0-2 11111 SECRET SPRINGS 22 10/10 1m 100yds 11-10

0-2 11111 ROBIN HALL 24 24 1m 100yds 11-10

11111 MEETING ABANDONED - FROST

FORM FOCUS

KALASH the 2m 110yd grade 1

Newmarket Novice Hurdle at Cheltenham (on

11/11-12) 1st to 12 to 14 to 16 April in

Secrets, but DAREDEVIL 31st 12 runs now

DAREDEVIL 31st 11/11-12 runs now

SECRET SPRINGS 31st 12 runs now

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To win it a fourth time would be something Reaching for a landmark on another grey day

RICHARD
DUNWOODY



On the task he faces in the King George VI Chase

If there wasn't enough at stake in the Pertemps King George VI Chase at Kempton today, there is an additional personal incentive. I hardly need one but I'm told no jockey has won the race more than three times. To win it a fourth time would be something to treasure.

I have to feel positive about reaching that landmark because One Man deserves to be favourite. He is quite a straightforward ride, although he can be a bit keen, as he was in the King George last year. He hit the front from a fair way from the finish but he was jumping so well that I didn't want to disappoint him.

That was the first time I'd ridden him. Even though I'd seen a lot of him and knew he was good, I was surprised when he won by 14 lengths. The horse was slightly short of work — the race was transferred to Sandown two weeks after Kempton was abandoned. Let's hope that does not happen today.

Great horses come in different shapes and sizes. You can get a totally different feed from one than from the next. As soon as you sit on One Man you can feel he uses himself well. You can sense his strength, but it is not the striking power of Desert Orchid. Every time I sat on Desert Orchid I couldn't believe the power in his neck.

Unless you'd totally ignored the media for the last 12 months, you'd be aware how important One Man has become to racing. There's an air of expectancy. Like Desert Orchid, he is a grey and the public loves grey. I suppose they stand out in a race, although One Man and Desert Orchid would stand out in any crowd, irrespective of their colour.

The two horses are very similar. Perhaps One Man is not quite as extravagant at his fences. Desert Orchid was naturally flamboyant. I'll never forget the two King Georges I won on him — particularly the second in 1990, which marked his fourth win. But One Man is hardly pedestrian. The way he jumped his fences down the back at

Sandown last year was brilliant. Even if he has some way to go before matching Desert Orchid, he can certainly put on an exhibition.

All jockeys savour the atmosphere at Kempton on Boxing Day. It is a festive crowd and they want something to cheer. However, none of this will matter when the race starts. It won't even enter my mind that I'll be riding an odds-on favourite. People talk about pressure but that's only something you inflict upon yourself. If anything, it is easier to ride in a race like the King George. I know all of my opponents. Some I have ridden before, so I have a fair idea of how the race will unfold.

Even so, I'll be playing things by ear. Sometimes the pace varies through a race as other jockeys try to set it up for themselves. It can make things difficult but One Man is very versatile, which is a big help. It's a lot more straightforward than riding one in

a 20-runner novice hurdle at a small track, when you never really know what you're up against.

Tactically, I prefer to concentrate on getting it right for myself rather than worrying about the opposition. It doesn't matter what's happening around you if you mess up your own chance. Nevertheless, Rough Quest must be a big threat. He won nicely over hurdles at Folkestone recently but I feel One Man would have started at odds-on in the same race.

I rode a horse for his trainer, Terry Casey, last week and Terry wasted no time in assuring me his horse was very well. Of course, it's far from a two-horse race — they never are at this level. But I know what my horse is capable of. I think the other jockeys will be more concerned with what my horse is doing.

I have been in regular contact with Gordon Richards, who trains the horse and has come to know him so well. And I must say it's encouraging to listen to him — he couldn't be more pleased. When I rode One Man to win at Wetherby seven weeks ago, he was forward enough to beat Barton Bank, whom he meets again today. I know Mr Richards feels he is sharper now.

I haven't ridden the horse since, but that's not necessary. Training chasers is not like Formula One, where the drivers test their cars at full speed. Horses seldom go anywhere near racing pace in their homework, although One Man will have done some strong work because his intended prep race for the King George was called off. He won't be lacking in fitness today.

For my part, I'll be fresh, having enjoyed a traditional lunch with my family yesterday. That's a luxury many jockeys can't afford at Christmas. Mind you, we could all have done without the traditional Christmas weather. All jockeys live for meetings like the one at Kempton today. We're prepared and very excited.



Dunwoody and One Man sail over the last on the way to a spectacular victory in last year's King George

LNGR ELD PARK	
THUNDERER	
12.50 Cadez Le Passage	2.20 Passage Creeping
1.20 The Wyandotte Inn	2.50 Walk Beach
1.50 Effervescence	3.20 Coh Sho No
Our Newmarket Correspondent: 3.20 Nothing Doing.	
GOING: STANDARD DRAW: 5F-1M, LOW NUMBERS BEST	

12.50 EPIPHANY CLAIMING STAKES (Div 1; £2,541; 1m 2f) (6 runners)	
1 11 050514 CEDREZEL PASSAGE 12 (GB) (A) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	2 120 FALCON'S FORTUNE 15 (GB) (C) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
2 120 400-232 BAROPPA 12 (GB) (A) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	3 120 5-2d SWANSON 15 (GB) (C) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
4 120 3-50232 THE WYANDOTTE INN 13 (GB) (A) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	5 120 5-2d GRIFFITHS 15 (GB) (C) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
6 120 5-2d 400006 NORTHERN CHEF 15 (GB) (A) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	7 120 5-2d V SHARPE 15 (GB) (C) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
8 120 5-2d 120553 HOW COULD I? 15 (GB) (C) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	9 120 5-2d J DUNLOP 15 (GB) (C) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
10 BETTING: 5-4 Barossa Valley, 3-1 Cedez Le Passage, 9-2 Stig Jo, 5-1 How Could I?, 6-1 Hone Sunshine, 2-1 Northern Chef	11 BETTING: 5-4 Barossa Valley, 3-1 Cedez Le Passage, 9-2 Stig Jo, 5-1 How Could I!, 6-1 Hone Sunshine, 2-1 Northern Chef
1996: NO CORRESPONDING MEETING	

1.20 MARY & JOSEPH NURSERY HANDICAP (Div 2; £2,248; 7f (7 runners))	
1 120 24540 ROYAL ORCHID 65 (M) (A) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	2 120 24540 ROYAL ORCHID 65 (M) (A) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
3 120 400-232 HEAVENLY MISS 15 (C) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	4 120 5-2d 30223 THE WYANDOTTE INN 13 (A) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
5 120 5-2d 60000 COUNTLESS TIMES 18 (M) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	6 120 5-2d 60000 COUNTLESS TIMES 18 (M) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
7 120 5-2d 2000-112 BLACKBIRD 15 (GB) (C) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	8 120 5-2d 2000-112 BLACKBIRD 15 (GB) (C) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
9 120 5-2d 20000 MYSTERY 27 (GB) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	10 120 5-2d 20000 MYSTERY 27 (GB) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
11 BETTING: 7-4 The Wyandotte Inn, 5-2 Heavenly Miss, 5-2 Royal Orchid, 6-1 Countless Times, 10-1 Mystery, 12-1 Northern Chef	12 BETTING: 7-4 The Wyandotte Inn, 5-2 Heavenly Miss, 5-2 Royal Orchid, 6-1 Countless Times, 10-1 Mystery, 12-1 Northern Chef

1.50 THREE WISE MEN MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (Div 2; £2,248; 7f (4 runners))	
1 120 600-24540 ROYAL ORCHID 65 (M) (A) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	2 120 600-24540 ROYAL ORCHID 65 (M) (A) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
3 120 5-2d 5662 LILY JADES 12 (A) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	4 120 5-2d 5662 LILY JADES 12 (A) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
5 120 5-2d 400403 SOURA 8 2 (A) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	6 120 5-2d 400403 SOURA 8 2 (A) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
7 120 5-2d 2000-112 BRIGHTON REISH 12 (C) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	8 120 5-2d 2000-112 BRIGHTON REISH 12 (C) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
9 120 5-2d 2000-112 JUSTMENTH 7 (C) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	10 120 5-2d 2000-112 JUSTMENTH 7 (C) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
11 BETTING: 4-7 Three Wise Men, 5-2 Soura, 6-1 Lily Jade, 7-4 Brighton Reish	12 BETTING: 4-7 Three Wise Men, 5-2 Soura, 6-1 Lily Jade, 7-4 Brighton Reish

2.20 SANTA CLAUS MAIDEN STAKES (23,469; 1m) (9 runners)	
1 120 600-24540 ROYAL CAPTION 13 (M) (D) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	2 120 600-24540 ROYAL CAPTION 13 (M) (D) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
3 120 5-2d 22539 ANTARCTIC HIND 12 (M) (D) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	4 120 5-2d 22539 ANTARCTIC HIND 12 (M) (D) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
5 120 5-2d 31333 LAMBRETTA 12 (M) (D) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	6 120 5-2d 31333 LAMBRETTA 12 (M) (D) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
7 120 5-2d 400-232 PRINCESS PHOENIX 12 (M) (D) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	8 120 5-2d 400-232 PRINCESS PHOENIX 12 (M) (D) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
9 120 5-2d 2000-112 LITTLE PLEASER 13 (M) (D) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	10 120 5-2d 2000-112 LITTLE PLEASER 13 (M) (D) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
11 120 5-2d 2000-112 RUMBLE 12 (M) (D) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	12 120 5-2d 2000-112 RUMBLE 12 (M) (D) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
13 120 5-2d 2000-112 TROTTIE 12 (M) (D) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	14 120 5-2d 2000-112 TROTTIE 12 (M) (D) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
15 120 5-2d 2000-112 VEE RIVER 12 (M) (D) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	16 120 5-2d 2000-112 VEE RIVER 12 (M) (D) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
17 120 5-2d 2000-112 WEE RIVER 12 (M) (D) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	18 120 5-2d 2000-112 WEE RIVER 12 (M) (D) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
19 120 5-2d 2000-112 WEE RIVER 12 (M) (D) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	20 120 5-2d 2000-112 WEE RIVER 12 (M) (D) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
21 BETTING: 4-7 Santa Claus, 5-2 Antartica Hind, 6-1 Little Pleaser, 7-1 Rumble, 8-1 Trottie, 9-1 Vee River, 10-1 Wee River	22 BETTING: 4-7 Santa Claus, 5-2 Antartica Hind, 6-1 Little Pleaser, 7-1 Rumble, 8-1 Trottie, 9-1 Vee River, 10-1 Wee River

2.50 EPIPHANY CLAIMING STAKES (Div 2; £2,520; 1m 20) (10 runners)	
1 120 31412 WARDEN 12 (GB) (A) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	2 120 31412 WARDEN 12 (GB) (A) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
3 120 400-232 WARDEN 12 (GB) (A) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	4 120 400-232 WARDEN 12 (GB) (A) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
5 120 5-2d 400-232 WARDEN 12 (GB) (A) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	6 120 5-2d 400-232 WARDEN 12 (GB) (A) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan
7 120 5-2d 400-232 WARDEN 12 (GB) (A) (Refined) & Caledonian-Snow 5-2d w Ryan	8 120 5-2d 400-2

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: SEASON RECORD FOR RICE HELPS TO PUT SAN FRANCISCO IN MOOD FOR PLAY-OFFS

Young leads charge as 49ers rout Detroit

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

SAN Francisco 49ers, their place in the play-offs already secure for the thirteenth time in 14 years, completed the National Football League (NFL) regular season with a 24-14 victory over Detroit Lions.

The 49ers had already been guaranteed their post-season place when Carolina Panthers claimed the National Football Conference West division title, and they warmed up for their wild-card match at home to Philadelphia Eagles with a straightforward victory on Monday night that will be best remembered by the three players who reached individual landmarks.

Steve Young, the 49ers quarterback, won another passing title and Jerry Rice, his team-mate, finished with the NFL season's record for receptions before they took the rest of the night off and watched Barry Sanders, the Detroit running back, win his third rushing championship.

Young, who played for the first half only, threw for two touchdowns as Rice hung on to beat Herman Moore, his Detroit counterpart, for the reception title.

Sanders ran for 175 yards, including a 54-yard touchdown, to finish with 1,553 yards for the season, overtaking Terrell Davis, of Denver Broncos, who recorded 1,538. It was Sanders's third successive season with at least 1,500 rushing yards — the first time that has been achieved in NFL history.

Young completed 11 of 14 passes for 96 yards and one yard touchdowns to Ted Popson and Derek Loville. The latest casualty is Mike

Gibson, who was removed by

Oakland Raiders to become the fifth coach to lose his job in five days. White joined Dan Reeves, of New York Giants, Jim Jones, of Atlanta Falcons, Rich Brooks, of St Louis Cardinals, and Rich Kotite, who resigned as coach of New York Jets. Earlier in the season Dave Shula was dismissed by Cincinnati Bengals and Jim Mora resigned from New Orleans Saints.

Among the possible replacements for White are Bugel, the Raiders' assistant head coach for offence, and Dennis Green, who has expressed an interest in the job should he leave Minnesota Vikings.

Wayne Fontes, the coach, is now expected to be dismissed by the Lions, who finished bottom of the NFC Central division with a 5-11 record,

having lost nine of their final ten matches. If he does go, it would mean that more than a quarter of the coaches in the NFL would have lost their jobs since the start of the season.

The latest casualty is Mike

Elvis Grbac went on to lead

the 49ers to another score,

finishing a third-quarter drive

with a six-yard touchdown on a quarterback draw for a 21-7

lead. Detroit answered with

Mitchell's five-yard scoring

pass to Moore, but Jeff Wilkins made the game safe for

the 49ers with a 49-yard field

goal.

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IN BRIEFS
Adams set to appeal over fine, Derbyshire

CRICKET

Australia in mood to complete rapid series victory

FROM MICHAEL HENDERSON IN MELBOURNE

Test here has assumed an overwhelming significance for the beleaguered West Indies cricketers. Australia, 2-0 up after the first two Tests of a five-match series, need only a draw to retain the Sir Frank Worrell Trophy and underline their status as the strongest team in the world. Another defeat for West Indies will lead to a thorough shake-up of their cricket and cricketers.

Courtney Walsh, whose captaincy can only be an interregnum between the departure of Richie Richardson and the likely investiture of Brian Lara, has reminded the players of their responsibilities, but this is no longer a team that terrifies opponents, certainly not ones wearing baggy green caps. Australia won the opening matches by the little matter of 123 runs and 124 runs, and are looking forward to a third successive victory in a ground where they have won six of their past seven Tests.

So desperately have West Indies played on this tour that there was wild – and as it transpired, unsupported – talk of asking Junior Murray, the wicketkeeper in the one-day team, to open the innings with Sherwin Campbell, who lacks a regular partner. That really would have been an admission of defeat.

It is, however, defeat that Walsh and his players are finding familiar, more so than any West Indies side since the one led by Clive Lloyd was hammered 5-1 by Ian Chappell's Australia in 1975-76. Success has led to atrophy and there is now open acknowledgement that the players are not up to the task of reviving West Indian cricket. Some of them are playing for their futures, although, in their bedraggled state at present, even that may not be enough to stir a healthy response.

Australia, somewhat oddly for a team that has become so dominant, have problems of their own. By dropping Ricky Ponting the Tasmania batsman, and Mike Kasprowicz, the Queensland new-ball bowler, they have identified two areas of concern that they hope to rectify in the short term. In the longer term, Ponting, as a player of true quality, will come again; Kasprowicz, nobody can be certain.

There is no quibbling with the omissions. Ponting has passed 15 only once in six innings at No 3 and Kasprowicz failed to take a wicket in either Test. Jason Gillespie, the left-arm bowler from South Australia, retains his place and the selectors have

summoned two left-handers, Matthew Hayden and Justin Langer, to bolster the batting.

Hayden, 25, the Queensland opener, made a stack of runs in England in 1993, but, with the emergence of Michael Slater, he seemed destined to live his career in the shadows. Now that Slater has lost form so completely, and Matthew Elliott injured himself during the Sydney Test, Hayden has the chance to make a case for himself as Mark Taylor's partner. In his previous Test, in Johannesburg two years ago, he was thrown into the fray at 20 minutes' notice.

At 25, and with six Tests behind him, Langer is a veteran by comparison. He struggled against West Indies four

years ago and appeared to be another batsman whose time had come and gone. Now, after making 598 runs in four first-class matches this summer, including an unbeaten 274 against South Australia last week, the Western Australian finds himself back in the party and, very likely, in the team. Michael Bevan, whose bowling has proved more effective in this series than his batting, is expected to stand down when the team is finalised.

An Englishman looking at the riches of Australian cricket can only wonder about Slater's absence. England would give their eye teeth to have a man as gifted. For that matter there is no Stuart Law, who dazzled for Essex last season, either. Instead, he captains Australia A in a one-day match against Pakistan in Sydney, but he must, one feels, play some part for the senior team before long.

If the year coming up is critical for West Indies, it is also important for Australia, who go to South Africa in March for three Tests (and the dog, seven one-day matches), and then go to England in May for six Tests, which is more than one Test too many. There will be some foot-wear critics by the time that jaunt is through, and Australia will have need of as many able-bodied and talented players as they can muster. Fortunately for them, they can muster quite a few.

Should they win the toss, Australia could easily bat West Indies out of the game on the first day. On the other hand, Lara owes his team runs, and Ambrose may find some reserves of pace or bloody-mindedness from somewhere. Realistically, though, the balance of skill will and expectation favours Australia.



Hayden has emerged from Slater's shadows to press his claims with Australia

Blind cricketers face change

BY BILL FRINDALL

BLIND cricketers in Great Britain must learn to play a vastly different game if they are to compete internationally. That was the stark message emanating from the inaugural international conference on cricket for the blind, held in Delhi.

This historic meeting was organised by George Abrahams, of India, who, having created impressive media and sponsorship backing for blind cricket in his own country,

turned his attention to the international arena some three years ago.

He found a sponsor for an international tournament, but his plans were thwarted by the fact that, although cricket has been an established sport for the blind and partially-sighted in Britain and Australia since the 1950s, the equipment and laws differ vastly between the countries.

To realise Abrahams' vision of a World Cup competition, a compromise had to be found between the British game (with its soccer ball housing ballbearings, over-arm bowling, catching permitted as a dismissal, enlarged wickets, eight-ball overs, 18-yard grass pitches and 35-yard boundaries) and the antipodean version (small wire-mesh ball encasing bottle caps, underarm bowling, no catching, standard stumps, six-ball overs, 22-yard concrete pitches and 45-yard boundaries).

Surprisingly, in a conference lasting only two days, delegates from seven countries – the Test-playing nations minus West Indies and Zimbabwe – agreed a form of cricket acceptable to all concerned. They settled for a white, hard plastic ball similar in size to a standard cricket ball but housing beads, under-arm bowling, catching, standard stumps, six-ball overs, a 22-yard grass pitch and a 45-yard boundary.

It is a compromise in which the best features of each version have been retained, but each nation will now have to learn a form of the game different from the one with which they grew up.

India settle on one spinner for first Test in Durban

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

INDIA resisted the temptation to play two spinners in their side for the opening Test match against South Africa when they announced a 12-man squad yesterday. Anil Kumble, the leg spinner, recently recovered from split webbing in his right hand, was an automatic selection as India's premier strike bowler, along with Javagal Srinath, the pace bowler.

However, Venkatapathy Raju, the left-arm spinner, tipped by some as a likely inclusion for the Durban Test because of South Africa's occasional struggles against the turning ball in India, has been omitted. Instead, India's attack will be led by the seamers, Srinath, Venkatesh Prasad and David Johnson, with the threat of Kumble, a world-class wrist spinner, kept as a probable trump card. Sachin Tendulkar, the captain, and Saurav Ganguly provide the back-up seam, while Wookeri Ramam, the opening batsman, may be employed with his occasional slow left-arm. V. V. S. Laxman, an additional batsman, is expected to be named as a 12th man.

India finished their preparations for the first of the three-Test series against South Africa with a workout at Kingsmead yesterday. Tendulkar, in confident mood after his side's recent 2-1 series victory at home, said that his team was looking to keep the momentum going.

"We want to maintain the positive outlook which we had in India – where all three Tests finished with results," Tendulkar said. "It will be imperative here in South Africa that our batsmen hit the loose ball whenever possible – and a positive outlook will help with this."

South Africa, who also completed their last-minute preparation with three hours of nets and fielding practice yesterday, will name their Test side from a 13-man squad today. However, Allan Donald, the pace bowler, and Shaun Pollock are available again after recovering from ankle injuries.

Leeds and Halifax contest a West Yorkshire derby at Headingley today, while Huddersfield and Keighley meet at the McAlpine Stadium.

□ Phil Larder, the Sheffield Eagles coach, has signed Whetu Taewa, 25, from North Queensland Cowboys.

SPORT LETTERS

No 10 holds rugby union's key

From Mr Raymond Carroll

Sir, If Scotland could be persuaded to look at a rearrangement of its rugby union team by selecting Gregor Townsend at No 10, such a choice could develop into the jewel in the crown of the upcoming five nations' championship.

By providing a cutting edge while exhibiting ball-carrying skills, Townsend is arguably the only playmaker in the northern hemisphere who also kicks cunningly, tackles to completion and has the capacity to direct the traffic from the pivotal position.

In the 50 championships since the war, the countries which have won grand slams, championships and triple crowns have nearly all been blessed with peerless No 10s: Kyle Morgan, Regan, Sharp, Albaladejo, Watkins, Gachassin, John, Bennett, Campbell, Rutherford, Mesnel, J. Davies, Chalmers and Andrew. These 15 players significantly contributed to 36 title-winning teams and won more than 500 caps themselves – no mean achievement.

Understandably, these half backs were not all in the same mould, having emanated from different kinds of pods and factories and, while some contributed with sleight of hand and deft footwork, others relied more on one, or even, *mirabile dictu*, both boots.

I have been privileged to say that they entertained joyously, played mainly with distinction and became role models for younger generations developing their rugby skills.

Could it happen in 1997 that the team with the best No 10 could nudge itself to the top of the European tree now that the other four nations have recently declared themselves, albeit inadvertently, effectively "tenless"?

Perhaps the advent of a professional era will permit history, from an amateur aeon, to repeat itself? If so, maybe the southern hemisphere could be surreptitiously persuaded to look up – even much as a little.

Yours faithfully,

RAYMUND CARROLL
The Beeches,
Mill Lane,
Cheadle, Cheshire.

Marathon entry not unfair

From the Chief Executive of the London Marathon

Sir, Mr Stan Weber (Sports Letters, December 20) correctly misunderstands the London Marathon entry system and his central complaint is that he, at the age of 78, was rejected.

The success of the event means that we have many more applicants than spaces and, no matter how fair the system, more than 36,000 had to be rejected and many are naturally disappointed. However, Mr Weber's assertion that male veterans are disadvantaged by the system does not bear scrutiny. In the 1996 race there were 30 women over the age of 65 but 356 men in the same category. We cannot see how men have been discriminated against in practice.

As to places for charities, we

are proud of the fact that last year our runners between them raised more than £10 million for various good causes. We reserve less than 10 per cent of entries for charities but more than 64 per cent, in fact, decided to run for charity.

Charities no doubt think more places should be reserved for them and Mr Weber thinks more should be given to older men. Every person rejected thinks their category should receive special treatment.

Let us stop the carping and instead celebrate the fact that Britain has the world's most successful and popular marathon.

Yours sincerely,
NICK BITEL,
Chief Executive,
The London Marathon,
PO Box 1234, SE1.

Giant of tennis

From Mr Huw Rees

Sir, I would like to add a personal reminiscence on the career of Stefan Edberg, who retired from tennis at the end of last month.

I first watched him play during the junior event at Wimbledon in 1983 and was immediately amazed that a Swedish player actually enjoyed and thrived on playing serve-and-volley tennis. Although his demeanour typified national traits then exhibited by Wilander and Nystrom, his attacking game was an even greater contrast. Here was a future World No 1.

The emergence of Boris Becker removed potential focus from Edberg and enabled him and Tony Pickard to concentrate on the natural improvement required in his game. There were some early carps about his apparent lack of personality and defeatist countenance, but the cognoscenti knew better.

By his first Wimbledon win, in 1988, Edberg had become the greatest reflex vollyer the game will likely see. In spite of Becker's hard hit service returns in the final, he was able to put the majority of them away with volleys hit at acute angles using the return's pace.

It appears contradictory that a man who played such physically demanding (though graceful) game should also display the sportsmanship that is now a matter of legend. Yet this is the very attribute that certain tennis followers most appreciate

about him, as it portrayed a socially acceptable example to future players, in a period when tennis players remain over-compensated and are sometimes criticised for not always showing their teeth.

Unfortunately injuries probably cost Edberg the Australian Open singles title in 1989 and 1990. However, his five-set loss from two sets to one up against Chang in the 1989 French Open final represents the closest a male player has come to winning all four grand-slam championships since Rod Laver's success.

The game would have significantly benefited from Edberg converting two of the ten break-points he held on Chang's service in the fourth set. History would then have recorded that the most complete player of the decade was also the most unassuming.

Yours sincerely,
HUW REES,
8 Gatwick Road, SW18.

Open invitation

From Ms J. M. Roper-Heaton

Sir, In view of Laura Davies's great success this year and the strength of her game, and following Fred Couples's invitation to her to play in his tournament next year, would it not be gentlemanly of the Royal and Ancient to invite her to play in the Open Championship at Troon?

Yours faithfully,
JILL ROPER-HEATON,
Mill Lodge, Horsham St Faith,
Norwich, Norfolk.

Sports Letters may be sent by fax to 0171-822-5211.
They should include a daytime telephone number.

By ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

This is a hand from an American event. It was recounted by Ronnie Rubin, a former world champion and victim of the coup.

Dealer East

Love all

♦52	♦KJ103	♦AQ
♦8842	♦AQJ	♦K1076
♦9	♦J764	♦K10532
♦QJ10987	♦A2	♦65
	♦98764	
	♦53	
	♦AQ8	
	♦K43	
W	N	E
—	—	—
3C	4C	5D
All Pass		Pass

Contract: Four Spades by South

West's bid of Three Clubs was pre-emptive, a method in common use in the United States. North's Four Clubs said that he had a strong raise to Four Spades.

When West led the nine of diamonds, the declarer, Zia Mahmood, played low from dummy and won in his hand with the queen. He continued with a spade to the jack and queen. Now, how should East

play? If East splits, Zia wins the ace and returns the eight of diamonds, setting up a finesse position against East's ten and ensuring three diamond tricks.

Having come to this conclu-

sion, Rubin switched to a club, hoping to set up a trick there before winning the king of hearts. That does not quite add up – give the declarer six spades and two diamonds, and he will always have to lose a club if he does not have the king. Yet notice Zia's clever play, diverting Rubin away from giving West a diamond ruff.

Zia won the club return in hand and played another spade. Rubin won and played his second club, and now Zia was able to lead a diamond from dummy towards the eight. If East splits, Zia wins the ace and returns the eight of diamonds, setting up a finesse position against East's ten and ensuring three diamond tricks.

□ Robert Sheehan writes Monday to Friday in Sport and in Weekend on Saturday.

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

LATOMY

- a. A quarry
- b. The anatomy
- c. All the atoms

METASTASIS

- a. The study of change
- b. Rapid transition
- c. A counter-revolution

MOSLINGS

- a. Fledgeling duck
- b. Momentary irritations
- c. Little bits

LAUDIAN

- a. Praising
- b. Alternative to Benedictine
- c. High Anglican

Answers on page 42

KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE

**CHOICE 1**

Bobby Ball adds his own special lustre to Aladdin's magic lamp

VENUE: Now at the Theatre Royal, Newcastle

**CHOICE 2**

... while Gary Wilmot polishes up his Buttons in Cinderella

VENUE: Now at the New Victoria, Woking

LONDON

THE CHINESE STATE CIRCUS Described as "the world's greatest acrobatic spectacular" the highly acclaimed Shandong troupe presents its two-hour all-acrobatics show. Tickets from £12.50. Box office: 0171-589 0000. Details: Chinese State Circus, 100 Grey Street (0191-232 2661). Today, 2pm and 7pm. Then Mon-Sat, 2pm and 7pm. Until Jan 18.

THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL Hans Christian Andersen's spelling story, about a poor girl giving the carrots on the way home, provides the inspiration for this magical musical show, devised and directed by Luke Deane. With original songs by Peter Lewis. Until Jan 19. Box office: 0161-449 0048. Today, 3.30pm. Then 4pm and 7.30pm most days. Ring box office to obtain. Closed New Year's Day. Until Jan 26.

PETER PAN Former Blue Peter presenter Dame Louise Jordan and Peter Duncan star in an adaptation of J.M. Barrie's swashbuckling adventure story. Set in Victorian London, it's played by James Lee (DC Docherty in *The B-52s*), make the fun-packed show for all the family. Leverhulme, Rushey Green, Cheadle

ART Helen Frainey, Tom Courtney and others in an ensemble of interesting drama about friendship, unspoken relationships and an almost-all-white cancer. Matthew Warchus directs *Wyndham's Chipping Campden*, WC2 (0171-585 1255). Today, 7pm; matin. Wed, 2pm, Sat, 5pm and Sun, 5pm.

BLINDED BY THE SUN French de la Tour, Daniel Bell and Douglas Hodge play scientists involved in a case of scientific fraud. Ron Daniels directs. Until Jan 19. Box office: 0171-589 0000. Details: Criterion, South Bank, SE1 (0171-526 2252). Tonight, 7.45pm. matin. Fri and Sat, 2.30pm. In rep.

ID BY JEEVES The Devilish musical creation by Alan Ayckbourn and Andrew Lloyd Webber. Set in Edwardian Woking, the farce, first attempted 20 years ago, now entirely revised. Lyric, Shaftesbury Avenue, W1 (0171-494 5045). Mon-Sat, 7.45pm; matin. Wed, 2pm.

LE CAPTIVE INVISIBLE Victoria Chaplin and Jean-Baptiste Thibaud return with their strange and whimsical evocation of the art of circus. Mermaid, Purfleet, Docklands, EC3 (0171-355 2222). From Dec 20, 7.30pm; and mats on Dec 31, 1pm. Then Tues-Sat, 7.30pm; and mats on Jan 1, 4pm. Then Tues-Sat, 7.30pm; and mats on Jan 2, 4pm. Until Jan 12.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL Richard Brasier in Neil Bartlett's adaptation. Lyric, King Street, London WB (0181-741 2311). Mon-Sat (except Jan 1).

FAMILY EVENTS

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Gillian Maxey

10181-690 0000. Today, 2pm and 5pm. Then various times; ring box office for details. Not per Jan 1. Until Jan 19.

SORCERER Anthony Newley back on the West End stage singing his heart out in the Leslie Bricusse musical. Tom Watt replaces his role as Dickens' best-loved character, Bob Cratchit. Donmar Warehouse, 10 Court Road, W1 (0171-435 2255). Today, 7.30pm; Sun, 7.30pm. Mon-Sat, 3.30pm; matin Thurs, 5.30pm. Until February 2.

ELSEWHERE LEATHERHEAD, David and the Andrew Titchener Band, and the most enduring shows from the canon of Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber, return to the Theatre in the Park, Haymarket. A musical treat for all the family. Thrillie Church (0171-378 2111). Today, 2.30pm and 7.30pm. Then Tues-Sat, 3pm; matin Thurs, 5.30pm. Until January 19.

NEWCASTLE Comedy duo Cannon and Ball star in another pantomime. Dazzle (0171-492 2222)

Institute, Aladdin. With Paul Asher, also Barry Gray of *Brookside*, and *Felicity Atwood* of *Neighbours*. Theatre Royal, 100 Grey Street (0191-232 2661). Today, 2pm and 7pm. Then Mon-Sat, 2pm and 7pm. Until Jan 18.

WONING Gary Wilmot stars as Buttons in the romantic story of *Cinderella*, who meets her Prince Charming and goes to the ball. Royal Exchange, Manchester (0161-204 0000). Play Barnsley, with Robin Chapman (who stars in a specially constructed ice ring) and "Split" the dog. New Victoria, Peacock, Arts Centre (01482 71144). Today, 2.30pm and 7.30pm. Then Tues-Sat, 3pm; matin Thurs, 5.30pm. Until February 2.

SOUTHAMPTON Lionel Blair plays the Mirror, with Bert Evidale as the Red Queen, in the classic fairy-tale of *Snow White* and the Seven Dwarfs. Mayfly, Corporation Street (01723 211811). Today, 2.30pm and 7pm. Then Tues-Sat, 7pm; matin Wed, 2.30pm; Sun and New Year's Eve, 3pm and 5.30pm. Closed New Year's Day. Until Jan 19.

LONDON GALLERIES COMBINE COMMON BURNS Experience (0171-532 4141). Festival Hall: The Scone Eye Visual Art and the Theatre (0171-960 4242). National Theatre, Dazzle (0171-228 2222)

and Jezz, Matthew Lloyd-Jones. National, Stalls, Old Vic, Covent Garden, (0171-222 9201). Mon-Sat, 8pm; matin Sat, 3.30pm. Until January 18.

IN THE OFFICIAL TRIBUTE TO THE BLUES BROTHERS Another West End showing for the cult songsters by guys in black leather. David Lee direct. Arts Theatre, 100 Grey Street (0171-494 5070). Mon-Thurs, 8pm; Fri and Sat, 6pm and 8pm.

LONG RUNNERS **THE DEVIL'S GATE**: Gale Edwards's chillingly acidic and violent production of Webster, up from Stratford with Jane Gunnell, Ray Fisher and good performances all round. Pit, Barbican, EC1 (0181-888 8891). Previewing Sat-Sun, 7.15pm; mat Sat, 2pm. Opens Jan 7. 7pm. In rep.

A DOLL'S HOUSE: No supertypes high enough for Janice McTeer in a production of Ibsen's probing social drama. Exploited play by Owen Teale and John Christie. Plymouth, Northamptpn Ave, WC2 (0171-904 4401). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat, 2.30pm.

THE ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT: Commissioned play from comedian David Schreiber in which he plays a single man never helped to find his mother. Sheila Stodel fancies a girl who isn't nice.

7.30pm. For 2.30pm contact box office (0171-227 0000)

CHICKEN DINNER: Action hero of 1994 radio comes to life in the London of double-bugs and etiquette. Musical farce from Phil Wilmett's Steamer Room. The Phoenix, 100 Grey Street (0171-227 8270). Tues-Sun, 7.30pm. Until January 18.

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■ FILM 1

The artist as seducer: Anthony Hopkins plays an unappealing genius in *Surviving Picasso*



■ FILM 2

Back in heroic mauling mode, Sylvester Stallone saves New Yorkers from a blazing tunnel in *Daylight*



■ FILM 3

Abbas Kiarostami completes his moving Iranian trilogy with *Through the Olive Trees*



■ FILM 4

Movie of the year? Lars von Trier's *Breaking the Waves* will be on most lists

CINEMA: Geoff Brown looks in vain for the genius inside the satyr in *Picasso*; plus his shortlist of Films of the Year

Portrait of the artist as a bounder

Care to spend Christmas with Pablo Picasso? To judge by the film *Surviving Picasso* it would not be easy. He might get you to cut his toenails or hair, and file away the clippings neatly dated. If you were a woman who caught his eye, he might make violent love, or flirt ostentatiously to discomfit a rival. If you were a man in his employ, he might sack you abruptly after decades of service. He also might paint a masterpiece or three and haggle with dealers or, weather permitting, parade his bronzed chest, prance like a satyr, and celebrate his virility with tools on a trumpet. What he won't do is act like Santa Claus.

This is the man played by Anthony Hopkins in the latest Merchant-Ivory production. He looks more like Picasso than you might imagine. There is the mole

Surviving Picasso
Warner West End
15, 122 mins
Gruelling times
with Anthony Hopkins

Daylight
Empire, 12, 115 mins
A tunnel ignites
and Stallone yell

Through the Olive Trees
Renoir, U, 103 mins
Peace and beauty from Iran

above the right eye. There is the close-cropped hair, the vigorous tan, the dark brown eyes. The Spanish accent is left to our imagination, although at least this Picasso never sounds as though he was born in Port Talbot.

But where is Picasso the towering artist of the 20th century, the man whose interactions with canvas and brush once formed the material for an entire film, *Henri-Georges Clouzot's The Picasso Mystery?* Not here, except in snatches. This film, based on Arisima Stassinosopoulos' biography *Picasso: Creator and Destroyer*, takes as its subject Picasso and women: all kinds of women, mistresses new and old, with or without children, plus one estranged and deranged wife. The story begins in 1943 in occupied Paris, when Picasso first meets art student, Françoise Gilot (played by screen newcomer Natascha McElhone). She stays for ten years, experiencing all of the master's cruelty and charisma.

By focusing on the man's wayward behaviour, and placing Picasso for much of the time in an uncluttered studio, the film never suffers from the piles of detail that suffocated *Jefferson in Paris*. Instead, it runs other risks. Where Nick Nolte's Jefferson was plain boring, Hopkins' Picasso comes to seem plain nasty. Greater coverage of Picasso the artist would have placed his personality in context: as the film stands, we have little to shield us from the rampant egoism and misogyny. Hopkins' ebullient performance only rubs salt in the wounds. You want to escape this man's company.

In part compensation, Ivory's direction is more animated than usual, and other players get chances to shine. McElhone stands her ground well as the patient Françoise and Peter Eyre sculpts



"Anthony Hopkins looks more like Picasso than you might imagine. There is the close-cropped hair, the vigorous tan, the dark brown eyes. But where is Picasso the towering artist of the 20th century?"

some memorable moments as Picasso's dogsbody Sabartes. Meanwhile, Julianne Moore has fun with the vampish character of Dora Maar, one of Françoise's predecessors. But for better or worse — worse, on balance — this is Picasso's show.

On now to *Surviving Stallone*, or, as the filmmakers prefer to call it, *Daylight*. Sylvester Stallone's articulation seems to be getting worse. The louder he yells as he rescues people from a fire-ravaged Manhattan tunnel, the less he can be understood. Not that the dialogue is exactly Noël Coward. Scriptwriter Leslie Bohem's idea of eloquence is to have people say: "Who the hell are you?" or "God, this is too much!" (the latter as water pours through a tunnel ceiling).

Too much indeed; although, to begin with, the spectacle is awesome. The disaster that hits the Holland Tunnel — a collision between a car and a truck stacked with toxic goodies — is expertly staged. A fireball tears: cars are crushed; people arefried to a crisp. After such genuine excitement, Rob

Cohen's film has no place to go except down, despite new bursts of debris, water galore, and a close encounter with extractor fans.

But for ardent students of disaster movies, *Daylight* may be a rewarding experience — simply by sticking to the rules. Here is the cross-section of humanity, all incomes, all colours, funnelled into the disaster zone. Here is the maverick man, Stallone, who alone has the nous and firepower to save them. Here once more is the decorative female, Amy Brenneman, who survives the fireball to lend a few muscles. There is also a dog, who lends a few barks. It is all very silly, very noisy and almost, but not quite, endearing.

"I've been wondering recently why it is that countries with a strong history of film-making are turning out worse films these days, and countries with a much younger film industry are producing some wonderful movies." Thus spoke Akira Kurosawa, inspired by viewing films by the Iranian Abbas Kiarostami (Neo-Realist, with Post-Modern twinges). He has been an art-house favourite in France for years, and is now deservedly making inroads here.

A young local bricklayer, hired as an actor, finds himself cast as the husband of a local girl whose grandmother, in real life, had refused his offer of marriage. The girl's obstreperousness makes film-

ing difficult, but the bricklayer takes advantage of the repeated takes and enforced closeness to woo the lady once more.

Those who missed the two instalments will miss the resonances of familiar faces, not to mention the Chinese-box feeling of one film locked inside another. But if the frills pass you by, the core material should fascinate. Kiarostami's camera can take an age observing things: be prepared to be patient.

As a reward, you come to share a human director's reverence for ordinary people in a landscape still under the earthquake's shadow.

Olive Trees bears a U certificate, although if you suspect that the kids may not sit still during an Iranian masterpiece there are other films to prise the family out of the house. The mischievous *Matilda*, based on Roald Dahl's novel, will give parents the most enjoyable time. Disney's *101 Dalmatians* passes muster, though more for Glenn Close's performance than the dogs. *Star Trek: First Contact*, the season's other big brouhaha, is a source of delight for hardcore Trekkers, but more objective viewers may be bored.

Reviewing the year's releases,

one realises with a shudder how few memorable films America has produced. *Independence Day* was hyped to the stratosphere, but no media blitz or special effects could arrest the damage caused by its muddled script. American films that stuck their neck out of the rut can be counted on one hand: *12 Monkeys*, *Seven*, *Safe*, *Toy Story* (for technique if not plot material) and, towering above them all, the Coen brothers' wintry, wry *Fargo*.

As the films tumbled out week after week, several worrying phenomena occurred outside the cinemas. Lottery money began dripping through to local producers just as the available outlet for independent films began to shrivel even more: we may be funding films that no one has much chance to see. Media pontificators whipped themselves up into a fury over a film few in Britain have yet seen: David Cronenberg's *Crash*, a technically skilled but dramatically limited exploration of the car-sex violence equation, based on a novel published 23 years ago.

And the British Film Institute crowned a sad year by securing £15 million of lottery lolly for a tourist attraction in sheep's clothing — London's third scheduled IMAX screen, towering 65ft high and 95ft wide in the Bull Ring, Waterloo. None of this is exactly the basis for a happy new year but, as Scarlett observed in *Gone With the Wind*, tomorrow is another day.

Romancing the stone

VISUAL ART: The Victorian heyday of coloured sculpture is marked by a new Leeds show

Painting is about colour, sculpture is about form, with hardly ever an important element of colour. Right? Well, not invariably, as a major international exhibition at the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds sets out to demonstrate.

To begin with, our perception of sculpture is founded largely on a misapprehension: The Parthenon friezes and the sculpted west fronts of medieval cathedrals are thought of as we see them today: pure white when in marble, a range of discrete stone shades when not. But people who saw them when they were new would have been confronted instead with a panoply of strong, even garish colour. Full realisation of this came as archaeological and ecclesiastical studies developed during the 19th century, and what scholars recognised one day artists would catch on to the next. John Gibson's *Tinted Venus* (1851-56) represented a watershed in Britain, and sculpture blossomed rapidly into full colour all over the Western world.

The exhibition points out that as well as "art sculpture" there was a continuing tradition of church sculpture, the domain of craftsmen rather than artists, which never abandoned polychromy. Some

of the anonymous examples shown are surprisingly characteristic, far indeed from the saccharine saints of convention. Again, increasing Western awareness of non-European traditions, from the Orient or the ancient Middle East, played its part.

Many of the subjects of these sculptures are dutifully exotic, as though in itself gave intellectual respectability to a deviation from what was still felt to be classical tradition. Hence, if, like Charles Cordier, the sculptor set out to depict a Jewess of Algiers around 1862, it would seem eminently reasonable that he should do so in a heady mix of onyx and bronze, gilt and inlay. Whereas if he were to select instead a Jewess of Prague he would be more likely to do it in the russet sobriety of bronze.

This kind of sculpture, particularly as represented by the camp fantasies of Chiparus, is much collected today. But in Leeds one can see the technique used also by major figures such as Alfred Gilbert. Sculptors of the period also

ventured seriously into "less serious" media such as ceramic, or worked extensively in materials like wax (Medardo Rosso) or pâte de verre (Jean Cros) to extend the whole range of sculptural possibility.

But sculpture is sculpture. If it is in three dimensions, even with a bas relief, it does not matter how highly coloured it may be. A coloured plaster relief by Robert Anning Bell may be very similar in style and size to his paintings, but because of the element of dimensionality the ultimate effect is quite different. And there is no denying the added power Jean-Léon Gérôme's *Bust of Bellona* derives from the gilt and the inlays.

Camille Claudel's *Lost in Thought* goes, in principle, even nearer to the edge of that kitsch which is always a danger in coloured sculpture, by constituting itself as a sort of fancy lamp, with the light in it emanating from the fireplace before which the female figure pensively kneels. But imagination can somehow contrive to make something look serious and right.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

Henry Moore Institute, 24 The Headrow, Leeds, 0113-246 9469, until April 6. Closed today, Jan 1, March 28 and 31.



Jean-Baptiste Hughes's *Ravenna* (1885): a piece from the golden — and other hues — age of coloured sculpture

Blues for Green

POP

Splinter Group
Empire, W12

Green played a discreet supporting role to singer and guitarist Nigel Watson; and old Fleetwood Mac favourites, which generally worked best.

The presence of drummer Cozy Powell and bassist Neil Murray was a mixed blessing. Essentially a heavy-rock-rhythm section, they provided a valuable thrust to numbers such as *The Green Manalishi* and *Black Magic Woman*, but at other times seemed in danger of overwhelming Green. Often it was left to Watson to guide proceedings, and to take the key solos, as he did during most of *Albatross*. At times it sounded uncomfortably like pub-rock.

They did not attempt Green's signature song, *Man of the World*, although the recorded version was played over the PA speakers as the crowd filed out. Nearly three decades later, it still sounded heartbreakingly sad.

DAVID SINCLAIR

Creatures small and great

All of us have had a childhood, and we claim the territory even while we dispute the best way to tell its stories. In her introduction to *The Faber Book of Contemporary Stories about Childhood*, Lorrie Moore discusses her own choices, and what these chosen stories have in common. All are written in the first person, and almost all of them are about what Moore describes as "moral occasions": that is, moments of discovery, testing, encounter or discernment on the part of the child. American childhood, in particular, is the subject of this anthology, and naturally so, as two thirds of the stories are written by Americans.

Possibly the dream of the right to pursue happiness is buried more deeply in the American psyche than in any other. These stories about childhood tend to confront head-on the incompatibility between that dream and what actually happens. In Toni Cade Bambara's ebullient *Gorilla, My Love* the narrator's ferocious sense of fairness is affronted at every turn by "grown-ups playing change-up and turning you round every which way so bad". Disillusionment can be subtle or blatant. In Susan Minot's *Hiding*, a mother and her six children come up with the idea of hiding in the airing-cupboard when her father returns home. To their dismay, he shows no concern at their absence, but sits down and switches on the football game. The reader's reaction to this may depend on whether he or she is a parent or a child. And this is, perhaps, one of the problems in the anthology's default setting of the American child first-person narrator. A perspective which at first seems fresh, poignant, touching, or chastening may appear



Dark vision of childhood: *The Gashlycrumb Tinies* from *The World of Edward Gorey*, by Clifford Ross and Karen Wilkin (Abrams, £25)

Howard Davies prefers a subscription to an anthology

Marx to Marx Bros

THE LONDON REVIEW OF BOOKS
An Anthology
Edited by Jane Hindle
Verso, £12
ISBN 1 85984 121 X

The effects of the long closure of the *TLS* in 1979 are still with us. Both *The London Review of Books* and *The Literary Review* owe their origins to the vacuum created by the *Thomson-Times* dispute, whose *catus bellis* is long forgotten. There was, in fact, a third pretender to the *TLS* throne: *Quarto*, edited by Richard Boston. But while it discovered a legion of talented and witty writers (and me) its financial resources expired in less than two years.

Both *Quarto* and *The Times Literary Review* were, I would judge, essentially opportunistic creations, seeking to fill a market gap. *The Literary Review* has, with Naim Atallah's support, survived longer, and its largesse (in £30 doses) allowed one impoverished Treasury official to buy a square meal or two in the early 1980s on the back of some caustic novel reviews.

But *The London Review of Books* was something else: a magazine with political ambitions, targeted at achieving the intellectual eminence on the left. Over here, of *The New York Review of Books*, over

there, it was to be more than a collection of book reviews, rather a journal of opinion; a journal with attitude.

The breadth of *The London Review of Books*'s ambition is described here in a "Reader's Note" from Perry Anderson: "No other journal in the country published such lethal attacks on the callousness, futility and corruption of the conservative system of power." These things can be seen most clearly, I find, from the history department at UCLA.

All on principle

Fortunately, neither this collection, nor the *Review* itself, concentrates exclusively on the futility of the Conservative system of power. The magazine has also been a home of good writing, often by people who know something about the matters whereof they speak. Both Edward Said and R. W. Johnson, for example, have illuminated Middle Eastern and South African politics for British readers, and they are well represented here. For a long time A. J. P. Taylor's diaries were a special pleasure; sadly, there is no sample of them in the *Anthology* — only a rather limp episode from Alan Bennett, who has written far more amusingly at other times.

Both of its editors so far, Karl Miller and Mary-Kay Wilmers, have also shown a good eye for the quirky, off-centre piece, which needs a longer space to breathe than is typically provided elsewhere. Nicholas Penny's discussion of picture frames, and Stanley Cavell's exegesis of the scripts of Marx Brothers' films, are brilliant examples. I knew little of picture frames, and cared less. Now I shall burn my friends with talk of tabernacles and "Sanzovins": a whole new field of gallery trawling opens up.

Both Miller and Wilmers also have enthusiasms which I cannot share. Edward Luttwak's *Why Fascism is the Wave of the Future* is too much

for me to be interested in his hired car. Then he remembered one of his principles. He ordered the driver to go back. With the guards now close he snatched back the cigarettes, saying "I'm not giving you those damn things. They are bad for your health." But Mr Wu is far from absurd. Like survivors of the Holocaust he is driven to make sure no one forgets. He concedes that he thrives on risk. He sneaked into a hospital ward and filmed a patient who cheerfully described the prisoners whose kidneys had been transplanted into all the men in the room. Peking at first denied such allegations, but nowadays claims that prisoners give their consent before they are shot.

He admires Ahab and his pursuit of Moby-Dick. "People say, 'Yes, but Ahab dies,' and I say 'Yes, but the whale dies, too'... Ahab chased the white whale, and now I chase the white whale of communism." But the whale kills Ahab, destroys almost everything else, and does not die.

JONATHAN MIRSKY

less so 20 stories on into the book.

The finest stories, as always, are the least predictable. While they speak from the intimacy of common experience, they do so in a way that astonishes because it is so recognisable, and yet so new. Alice Munro's brilliance is well represented by *The Turkey Season*, told by a 14-year-old schoolgirl gutting turkeys as a holiday job, who enters a world as strange to her as the "deathly cold... in the turkey's dark insides." Rigorous, tender and exact, Munro does not put a foot wrong.

Edna O'Brien is also in complete command of her material here. In *My Mother's Mother* she writes of the child's longing for her mother becoming the desire to break away from her, as her grandfather slouches forward into the death that terrifies him, and is laid out looking "like a frosted plank". O'Brien is wonderful on the bizarre and fearsome detail that hedges a child's life. Then there is Spalding Gray's *Sex and Death to the Age 14* with its immortal, untruthful final line: "Yes, yes, I'll buckle down. I'll buckle down. I'll do it. I'll buckle down." All the resistance and feigning grace of childhood lie in that promise of obedience.



Jeanette Winterson: writes as if she is at peace with herself and the world

Creating a grand unified novel

Marianne Wiggins delights in quirky prose

Grand Unified Theories (gratifyingly abbreviated to GUTs) pretend toward proving that the fundamental structure of the physical world, every thing of any matter (you, me, the Universe) is in a state of eternal, elegant, slippery

ice) — and unites them in all possible combos (Jove and Stella; Alice and Jove; Stella and Alice). Further, and seemingly effortlessly, she combines them not only carnally (in more ways than one), but historically, ranging her narrative backward a generation through time and through place.

Winterson's sense of place and power of description have never been better — it is as though all her previous works of fiction have been exercises working up to this achievement. One senses her mastery on each page — and one senses, too, that the sensibility informing the narrative is one that is at peace with herself and the world: she's no longer writing to prove she can write, nor writing to put out a smouldering argument. This is a fully matured book, all the more astonishing because of the author's age and because of (I must say it) the conceit and emptiness of heart in some of her previous work.

This is Max Planck's fault. If he and Einstein and Schrödinger after them, had kept their eyes on the arrow and their minds closed at the turn of the century, then your head and mine and Jeanette Winterson's might still be as blissfully stuffed with gos as any (Fig Newton).

But Time marches on (when it's not marching past and/or marching off), and what physicists of this century have given us are not more solid proofs, more stable models of material existence, but a set of possibilities based on things (the sub-atomic performers formerly known as "Quarks") which have never actually been proven to exist.

Sound familiar? Heracitus would feel right at home with our current Uncertainty Principle. So would Paracelsus. As would any Paraclete, in fact; and every modern poet, novelist and dramatist worth the SALT.

Particle theory lends itself sublimely to practitioners of parts of speech — and (but of course) vice versa. The very word *quark* as a name for something that must be but (so far) isn't, was mischievously appropriated from Joyce's *huzza in Finnegans Wake*. "Three quarks for Master Mark!"

Unfortunately, most of these quirky works have failed muster, and missed their marks (Tom Stoppard's brave attempt in *Hapgood*, and Martin Amis's mechanical *Tone's Arrow*, for example). But now at last a gutsy writer has provided a GUTsy work — playful, elegant and multi-dimensionally luminous enough to

tender, swamping, liberating, breathing, moving, thinking nature, human nature and the cosmos are patterned together."

GUT SYMMETRIES

By Jeanette Winterson

Granita, £15.99
ISBN 1 85207 000 8

It is a tale of Joyce's three original quarks, and plays on the theory that they can be or are will be or have always been Unified. Narratively, she translates particle theory into three forces: a man (Giovanni, called Jove), his wife (Stella) and his mistress (Alluvia; called Al-

ice) — and units them in all possible combos (Jove and Stella; Alice and Jove; Stella and Alice). Further, and seemingly effortlessly, she combines them not only carnally (in more ways than one), but historically, ranging her narrative backward a generation through time and through place.

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A lingering trace of that conceit still dogs the beginning of the novel (and its brazenly nose-thumbing title), but as soon as Winterson stops announcing what she's going to do and just does it, a magic occurs and the narrative sings. Small perfections multiply throughout — her choice of names for characters, for example; her stunning aphoristic turns, her poet's cisions, both pre and cor.

What begins as a story about one woman's affair, evolves (as true love always does) into a manner of spiritual oneness. "We are and we are not our bodies," Winterson writes. "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends."

Nor will this novel's potential to generate its wisdom and its joy. To the extent that she has written a story that becomes a part of its reader, Jeanette Winterson has given us the quantum novel.

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Antonia Fraser is gripped by a compelling tale of passion and untimely death in the 17th century

Frankie, it will not be." With these words, the youthful Earl of Essex, having "laboured a quarter of an hour", gave up on making love to his wife, Frances Howard, forever. The marriage could not be, and now would not be, consummated. It was shortly before Christmas 1612. The stage was set for one of the most bizarre sex 'n' poison scandals of our annals, the fact that it all took place at the Court of King James I giving the mystery a further piquancy. (No modern royal scandal can compete with this one.)

Giving up after a mere quarter of an hour — although it must have been an eternity for Frankie — may seem to indicate a rather faint-hearted approach on the part of the 21-year-old Essex. However, the latest effort was merely the last unsuccessful endeavour in what had been a series of failures ever since the young couple, married in their teens, were allowed to cohabit. What happens afterwards is a sorry yet fascinating story which Anne Somerset, in *Unnatural Murder: Poison at the Court of James I*, delineates with great skill.

The marriage of the Earl of Essex and Lady Frances Howard, daughter of the Earl of Suffolk, in 1603 was planned as a political alliance. The fact that love did not come into it neither made the marriage unique — love matches were rated sentimental rubbish in the first place.

UNNATURAL MURDER:
Poison at the Court of
James I

By Anne Somerset
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £20
ISBN 0 297 81310 2

the time — nor doomed to failure. Even Essex's lack of performance might have been endured were it not for two considerations. One was Frances's consequent inability to bear a child; the second, perhaps more important, was Frances's own beauty which meant that she inevitably attracted other offers from courtly gallants.

The man whose offer she accepted was Robert Carr, and odd as it may seem by modern standards, King James, his homosexual patron (certainly in love with Carr if not certainly his lover), approved the match. This left the problem of annulling the Essex marriage — since paradoxically the Reformation had left Protestant England without divorce laws, only the cumbersome ecclesiastical process of annulment, which meant, literally, there had been no marriage in the first place.



A remarkable woman: Frances, Countess of Somerset

Unfortunately at this point the luckless Essex complicated matters by declining out of pride to admit to his impotency in general, only in particular towards Frances, whom he referred to as "that base woman", having apparently assumed that Robert Carr was in the relationship for dalliance, not matrimony.

The arrest of Overbury and his committal to the Tower of London was the first grisly step which led to his death, either by poison (as contemporaries firmly believed) or from septicæmia, as a result of a leading doctor's unwise medical technique, which as Anne Somerset points out is at least a possibility.

If we accept the contemporary hypothesis of poison, who wanted Overbury dead? A number of underlings were tried for poisoning the wretched man and hanged in batches. Nevertheless, the prime suspect remained Frances, by now married to her lover and thanks to his ennoblement Countess of Somerset. The whole annulment process was tricky enough, yet Overbury, who hated not only her but the whole house of Howard, was threatening disclosures to wreck it. Eventually the scandal got too great for King James to contain, and both Earl and Countess of Somerset were tried, found guilty but given a royal pardon. Their sentences were commuted to imprisonment, and not particularly rigorous imprisonment at that.

On the evidence presented by Anne Somerset, one can

only agree with her about Frances's moral guilt — Frances intended to kill Overbury with her disgusting jellies and potions, even if the unwise doctor got to him first. Equally, her suggestion that Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, was not actually guilty seems to be plausible enough. Anne Somerset's comment that it is impossible nevertheless to feel much sympathy for him (irritation with a feckless character) must be balanced against her real imaginative sympathy for Frances.

The behaviour of Sir Edward Coke prosecuting the countess at her trial proceeded from the simple premise that "adultery is poison". Since Frances had committed adultery with Robert Carr (a shaky premise if the first marriage had been annulled into non-existence) ergo she must as an adulteress, be a poisoner. The vicious misogyny with which Frances was treated may not acquit her of causing Overbury's death, but it certainly explains the desperate measures she felt impelled to take to secure a chance of happiness — marriage to Robert Carr. As Anne Somerset writes, Frances was in many ways a remarkable woman, differing radically from the conventional pattern of docile femininity which 17th-century females were expected to follow. This gives a further tragic dimension to Anne Somerset's gripping narrative.

A Whitworth 12-pounder during field trials in 1863

More than a rifle bore

In 1846 Jane Carlyle visited Joseph Whitworth's factory in Manchester and wrote of him to her husband that he had invented many wonderful machines and, despite lacking airs and graces, had "a talent that might drive the Genii to despair". C. P. Scott, born that year, and later much helped and encouraged by Whitworth, said after his death that few had done more to carry forward "the great task of humanity", which was to establish "the supremacy of intelligence over the material universe".

Victorian Britain's pre-eminence in the world owed at least as much to its engineers as to any other group of people; yet they

John Grigg

SIR JOSEPH WHITWORTH

"The World's Best Mechanician"

By Norman Atkinson

Sutton, £25

ISBN 0 7509 1211 1

ising to be told that "much political effort has been dissipated over past decades, arguing furiously whether industry should be state-owned". It is

equally remarkable that he attacks the fatal redistrictiveness of British craft unions.

Whitworth, which at the same

time throws an even more interesting light on himself

and on the contemporary Labour Party. Atkinson was a machine-tool draughtsman before becoming, for more than 20 years, a left-wing Labour MP. His technical background enables him to understand and explain Whitworth's inventions. But what must strike the reader more forcibly is his reaction to Whitworth as a social and economic phenomenon.

While it is no surprise that he applauds Whitworth's view that the State should intervene to promote technical education and impose quality control in industry, it is rather astonishing

that he attacks the fatal redistrictiveness of British craft unions.

Whitworth had no time for trade unions, but paid his men above union rates and was altogether a most enlightened employer. His co-partnership scheme pointed towards "a share-owning democracy much in advance, as it happened, of the very limited parliamentary democracy which existed at that time". Unfortunately it was a failure, as Atkinson notes without a trace of ideological relish.

His book is not the easiest to read, partly because it is somewhat awkwardly written.

All the same, it is well worth reading, and one can only admire the author's fair-mindedness and generosity. As an evidently chastened socialist of our age, he has paid a fine tribute to a giant of Victorian capitalism.

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All the same, it is well worth reading, and one can only admire the author's fair-mindedness and generosity. As an evidently chastened socialist of our age, he has paid a fine tribute to a giant of Victorian capitalism.

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From the adorable wretch

John Bayley on a family man revealed in his letters



"How intolerable, how high-minded, how tender to me... and somehow tremendous" — Virginia Woolf with her father, Sir Leslie Stephen, in 1902

SELECTED LETTERS OF LESLIE STEPHEN
2 Volumes
Edited by John W. Bicknell
Macmillan, £90
ISBN 0 333 42296 6

Magazine than he could have done by teaching. He visited America during the Civil War, of which his view, unlike those of the English Tories, was the politically correct one. He made many friends, and in 1867 he married Thackeray's daughter Minny and spent a honeymoon in the Alps which resulted in a lifelong

enthusiasm and expertise. Vivid and charming, informative though seldom soul-searching, his letters give us an admirable picture of his circle and his times, and make a fine companion piece

GENERAL APPOINTMENTS

Legal Aid Means Assessment

The Legal Aid Board is the largest purchaser of legal services in England and Wales. Over recent years we have initiated major changes in the delivery of a service which affects the lives of millions. At the same time we have made real progress in promoting Total Quality Management in all areas of our operation. As part of a major package of further reforms we are taking over legal aid means assessment from the Benefits Agency. This will result in a fully integrated service provided, through our thirteen Area Offices and will represent a significant service improvement.

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As manager of our Special Investigations Unit, making use of your substantial project management and leadership skills, you will take responsibility for the transfer of this high profile function from the Benefits Agency in Preston to the Legal Aid Board in London. Thereafter you will lead a team whose emphasis will be

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Qualified to degree level or equivalent you will have solid experience of operational or project management, an analytical frame of mind and an ability to communicate clearly and simply to a wide range of audiences. You will be numerate, confident in your dealings with policy makers and commentators at all levels and committed to fairness in the delivery of a highly customer focused service. Ideally you will also possess a working knowledge of financial services, Inland Revenue practices and the major welfare benefit systems. Ref. A1318.

If you believe you have the skills to fill these challenging new roles, please send

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Based in the City, our determination to succeed, and a great deal of hard work, has already been of substantial benefit to over 1000 local SMEs.

The role of the Funding Counsellor is crucial to the success of Business Link. Probably AQB qualified, and working closely with Personal Business Advisors, you will be responsible for advising clients on how to structure requests for financial assistance in order to maximise their effectiveness, and acting as a brokerage service, including assisting with negotiations where appropriate. You will additionally develop close working relationships with funding sources, also organise finance awareness workshops and services for staff and clients.

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• An understanding of financial management and analysis.

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• An ability to organise and prioritise work.

• A working knowledge and successful working experience of a wide range of finance raising options, specifically to include ABS, NASDAQ, equity finance, specialist and banking finance.

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Applications by CV are invited from high calibre, experienced business professionals to our recruitment adviser, Waters Woodbridge Limited, Kent House, Market Place, London WIN 7AJ. Fax: 0171 251 3125. Email: 10030103@compuserve.com. Please quote reference PCA 2312. Closing date 7th January 1997. Short listed candidates will be required to spend 1 day at our Assessment Centre.

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Interested persons should send in their applications before 3rd January 97 to Box No 2116, Times newspapers Ltd, PO Box 3553, 1 Virginia Street, London E1 9BD.

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We are particularly keen to recruit women and men from a variety of age groups and backgrounds who have a real interest in the NHS, can communicate their own views and opinions constructively and challenge others in a positive and objective way.

You may have professional skills and experience but high value will also be placed on links to the local community. Leadership skills would be particularly important for those who wished to be considered as potential chairpersons.

The South and West Region covers the counties of Gloucestershire, the previous county of Avon, Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, and the Isles of Scilly, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Dorset and the Isle of Wight.

For an information pack and application form, please contact Anne Fiddes, Membership Services Officer, NHS Executive South and West Regional Office, Westward House, Lime Kiln Close, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS12 6SR. Tel: (0117) 984 1868. Closing date for receipt of completed applications will be 8th January 1997.

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Recruitment packs which provide further information on the Authority and the Executive can now be obtained from the Director of Personnel, Glasgow City Council, 48 Albion Street, Glasgow G1 1LH or by telephoning 0141 287 5125. Completed applications should be returned no later than Monday 6th January 1997.

John F Anderson Secretary Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority



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IT to provide accurate information and support service routines, you will also develop business systems to enhance the efficiency and accountability of our external contractors - who make a significant impact to our service delivery.

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In addition to a generous salary we offer an extensive range of benefits including pension and performance-related pay. For an opportunity to lead change at the most senior levels, send your cv to Fiona Peett, Personnel Manager, Thames Water Utilities, Rose Kiln Court, Rose Kiln Lane, Reading RG2 0HP. Closing date 13th January 1997.



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To plan, direct and control all financial functions and provide accurate and timely advice to senior management to enable the airline's strategic objectives to be achieved.

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The role involves high level negotiations, review of airline performance data and control over a number of non-financial departments reporting to the position.

KEY REQUIREMENTS

- Proven financial skills in presenting balanced budget proposals, identifying key trends, evaluating effectiveness of control measures and preparing annual accounts for presentation to management
- Ability to negotiate favourable contracts in areas such as major insurance policies, properties and aircraft leasing
- Good knowledge of aircraft financing requirements, including evaluation of leasing and acquisition arrangements
- Airline financial experience is obligatory. Candidates from similar sized airlines are especially encouraged to apply due to the broad accountabilities and less specialised nature of this position
- A working knowledge of company law is required and additional experience of EDP management will be favourably considered
- As a key member of the corporate team and with more than 200 staff reporting to the position, compensation levels will not be an issue for the right candidate.

APPLICATIONS

Please Note: All applications will be treated in the strictest confidence, with no approach made to contact current employer or referees without expressed permission first being granted by the candidate.

Please send written applications by fax, including full personal details together with copies of qualifications by 31 December 1996 to:

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Ski market climbs new peaks

By GRAHAM DUFFILL

THE TOP end of the skiing market is thriving. Bookings for the most up-market operator are 18 per cent higher than at Christmas last year.

The skiing industry has always relied on the rich to keep it in business, although that seemed likely to change in the 1980s boom years, when there was a sudden rush of less affluent skiers.

Crystal Holidays, Airtours, the Canadian resorts, Eastern Europe, Andorra and the Pyrenees will be among the beneficiaries of average-income families that became hooked on mountain snow and *apres-ski* and have become diehard skiers.

When most skiing operators dipped downmarket to pick up the new budget skiers, David Kemp switched from publishing to create a company, in 1987, that would cater for the other end of the market.

The Ski Company's chalet-holiday prices begin where others end, and weeks that cost more than £1,000 a head are more common than those with three-figure prices.

Mr Kemp explains: "I wanted a company that provided the sort of holiday I wished to go on and which the market did not offer."

The strategy was expensive. His idea was to buy or lease chalets for several years and to staff them year-round. Typical of the staff are Paul Gow and Diane Beck, who run the Chalet Gueret in the Portes du Soleil in the French Alps. Ms Beck is a professional cook and Mr Gow an expert on cheese, who briefly owned a cheese shop on the Isle of Wight after

he gave up working as an arbitrage broker in the City.

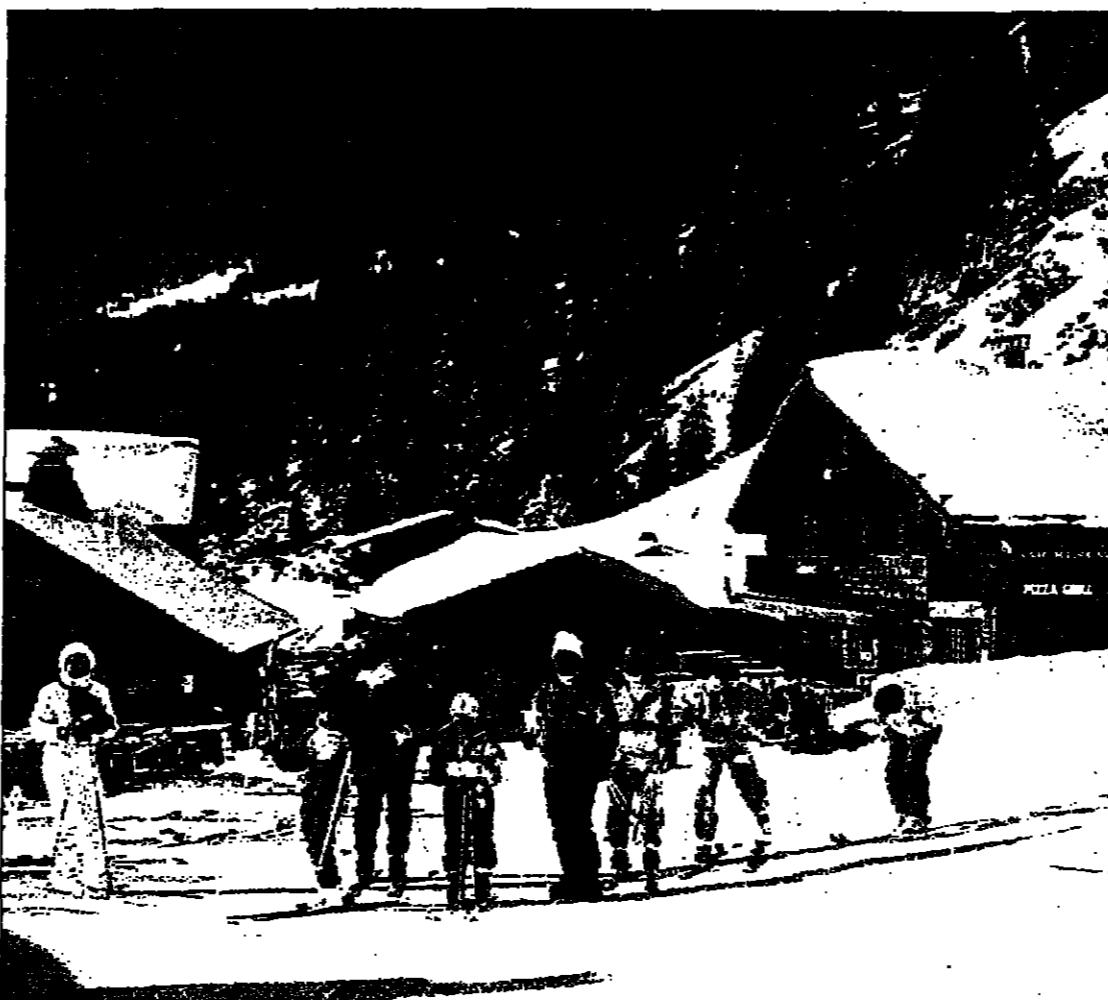
Mr Gow will act as chalet manager, *maitre d'*, driver of the minibus at the client's beck and call, deliverer of children to ski school, organiser of ski guides and lift passes and, importantly, expert on how to get the best out of the area and avoid hitches.

The cook lays on as many meals or snacks as required and drink flows freely as guests request. A week of such personal attention over Christmas costs about £1,500 a head and all nine chalets are fully booked. Low-season prices fall to £750 in the Chalet Gueret in Morzine, France, and £787 in Méribel in January.

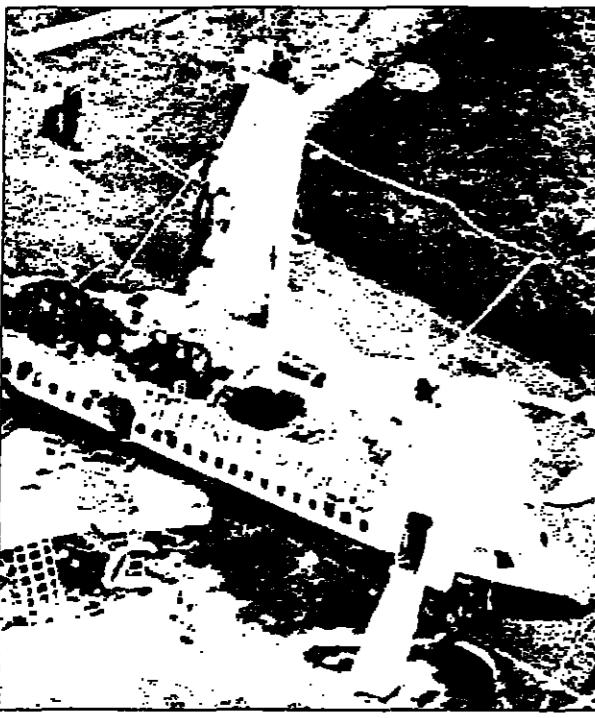
Two years ago the Ski Company merged with the upmarket tour operators Abercrombie & Kent to reduce costs and increase its marketing power. Bookings are up by 18 per cent and for the first time before Christmas the company is 89 per cent booked for February and March.

Skier Scott Dunn, which also targets the upmarket end of the ski industry, has had to turn away as many requests for accommodation as it could fill. The company's Andrew Dunn says: "We are 80 per cent full for the whole season."

The ski industry as a whole is 14 per cent up after two seasons in which the number of people going skiing slumped by 5 per cent each year. Crystal Holidays reports a 50 per cent rise in numbers to Bulgaria and Andorra. Andy Perrin, the marketing manager, says: "Many are beginners, which is good news for the industry."



French leave: Morzine, one of the six resorts at which the Ski Company offers its luxury chalets



This aircraft fire at Manchester airport killed 55 passengers

Jet escapes made easier

By HARVEY ELLIOTT

AIRLINES are to be ordered to improve emergency escape procedures and ensure quicker evacuation from charter and scheduled aircraft in the event of a fire.

The new regulations are to be made mandatory throughout Europe more than ten years after similar safety recommendations were made after the 1985 Manchester airport disaster, in which 55 people were killed when a British Airline Boeing 737 caught fire on take-off.

The tough new rules are to be introduced in the spring. The key change is in the way that the emergency exit above the wing of most aircraft is opened. In the Manchester fire, many survivors complained that they had trouble opening the escape door because seats were too close, that it was difficult to unlock

and remove the overwing door and that passengers became jammed in the narrow aisle.

After years of detailed investigation by scientists at Cranfield University in Bedfordshire, the Civil Aviation Authority is close to finalising a Europe-wide agreement on the new safety measures.

John Beardmore, a Manchester survivor and leader of the Sci-Safe organisation which has been pressing for improvements since the Manchester accident, said: "At long last, something looks as if it will be done to improve emergency evacuation."

The new procedures — already signalled by European safety organisations ahead of a formal agreement expected in the new year — include widening gangways near

galleys and lavatories, and changing the way emergency exit doors can be opened. Instead of being turned and pulled inwards, the doors will have to slide up on rails to a stowage area behind the luggage bins. The existing minimum width of a gangway for any airline in Europe is 480mm compared with the proposed 720mm minimum.

The Cranfield research suggested that existing escape hatches were too heavy for most passengers to handle in an emergency. The new method of opening the door relies on springs and a guide rail to shoot the door up to the ceiling.

Talks are now under way to finalise the wording of new safety rules which will be sent to all airlines operating in

Europe and which could eventually be extended worldwide. Some modifications will have to be carried out immediately; others will apply only to new aircraft.

Many changes in aircraft safety were introduced soon after the Manchester fire, but survivors have long argued that there are still too many loopholes which need to be filled to ensure passenger safety and have accused the CAA of dragging its feet over their introduction.

A CAA spokesman said it had acted as quickly as it could. "Research had to be undertaken in great detail," he explained. "We cannot just introduce changes unilaterally and any proposal has to be approved on a European-wide and we hope, eventually, worldwide basis. This takes time."

TRAVELS OF THE WEEK

Bag a safari in the January sale

SAFARIS at a saving of up to £100 a person are available from Kumuka with a 20-day tour of Kenya and Tanzania leaving Nairobi on January 14 costing £495 a person. Take your own tent; flights extra. Details: 01992 456100.

■ THREE free nights at a beach resort on Bintan, Indonesia, are on offer in January and February from Simply Tropix for those booking five nights at the Concorde Hotel, Singapore. Prices start from £750 a person including flights. Details: 0181 373 1777.

■ BOSTON breaks are available from today with four nights for the price of three from Funway Holidays. Deals start from £319 a person including Virgin Atlantic flights, hotel and a discount booklet. Details: 0181 466 0222.

■ SWISS Travel Service has short breaks at ski resorts from £283 a person including two nights' accommodation and flights. Details: 01992 456123.

■ CHILDREN under 12 go free with two adults to Disneyland Paris until Easter with Paris Travel Service. Two night self-

drive holidays start at £136 an adult including entrance and accommodation. Details: 01992 456100.

■ FREE upgrades to half-board accommodation in Elat are available on some Longwood holidays in January. Prices from £339 for a week including hotel, with return flights. Details: 0131 551 4494.

■ RAMADAN specials are on offer from Jasmin Tours from January 10 with six nights B&B at Aqaba on the Red Sea costing £349 a person, flights included. Details: 01628 531121.

■ STAY for two nights on any January weekend at Cardiff's Park Thistle Hotel at £30 a person a night and get a third night free. Details: 01222 383471.

■ The Montcalm Hotel in London has spaces for its New Year's Eve dinner at £65 a person. Details: 0171 402 4288.

■ The Hotel Villa Emma in Dresden has a two-night opera programme from January 1, including ticket and a bathrobe. Details: 0800 181535.

FLIGHTS

UNTIL January 10, a Eurostar standard daytrip return starts at £49 from Waterloo and Ashford to Lille and Calais; £59 to Brussels and £69 to Paris. Details: 0345 303030.

■ A DAY return on Wightlink Ferries from Portsmouth-Fishbourne (Isle of Wight) is available through Eurodrive until December 31. The £3 fare applies after 9.25am on weekdays. Details: 0181 324 4000.

■ SWANSEA Cork Ferries has a "Sunday Saver" fare costing £165 return (a car and five passengers). Details: 01792 456100. Details: 0500 747 757.

FLIGHTS

FOUR airlines — Virgin Atlantic, Air New Zealand, Ansett and Malaysia — are to market a round-the-world fare. Priced from £777, the Wanderer provides travel to Australasia with three stopovers in the Far East, US or South Pacific. Two further stopovers can be added for £50 each. Details: 01293 747747.

■ AIRLINE Network has an Air France Concorde Special. Passengers fly from London or Manchester to New York with Concorde returning on a sub-sonic business-class flight at £2,462. Book by December 31. Details: 0500 747 757.

GENERAL APPOINTMENTS

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If you are interested in becoming an integral part of a growing corporation which offers an attractive compensation and complete benefits package, please send a letter and your resume to: COMMUNICATIONS TEST DESIGN, INC., 1373 Enterprise Drive, West Chester, PA 19380, U.S.A. FAX: 610-436-8914, Attn: Human Resources. EOE M/F. Smoke/Drug Free Workplace.

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Customer Service or HR, within a progressive service organisation such as financial services or utilities. A team player, energetic and lively, you should also have the stature to command the respect of senior management in client companies.

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- Fluency in Hindi and English.

- A relevant degree and an MBA from a leading business school.

Potential client contacts in India would be advantageous. Salary £30,000 plus discretionary bonus. Written replies to Box 2162, c/o The Times, PO Box 3553, Virginia Street, London E1 9BL.

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**Bag a safari
the Januan!**

Equities stay firm in short session

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

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Festive run gives the index its fifth gain in as many days

THE London stock market continued rewriting the record book on Christmas Eve with share prices ending the shortened session at another new closing high.

It was the fifth consecutive day of gains for the FT-SE 100 index, which closed just a shade below its best of the day with a rise of 5.3 at 4,025, stretching the rise over five days to 12.9.

Turnover reflected the shortened session with just 260 million shares changing hands by the close of business, the lowest level of the year.

Northern Electric returned from its brief suspension to firm at 639p just hours before the extended deadline for acceptances of CE Electric's £782 million bid. The Takeover Panel, which was

responsible for extending the deadline, also rapped BEW, Northern's adviser, for withholding information that might have affected the outcome of the bid.

Meanwhile, CE Electric was facing fierce opposition to the bid from the Prudential Corporation, the City's biggest fund manager, which was again bidding for stock in the marketplace. By the 1pm deadline for the bid on Tuesday, the Pru had picked up 709,487 shares through Cazenove, the broker, stretching its total holding to 12.05 per cent. Brokers said then it was unlikely to be enough to save Northern from the clutches of CE Electric. Northern finished 4p cheaper, at 637p.

The takeover spotlight has now fallen on Yorkshire Elec-

tricity, up 4p at 802p, and Southern Electricity, unchanged at 778p, simply because they are the two remaining independent regional electricity companies. City speculators think it can only be a matter of time before bids are forthcoming.

Christmas certainly came early for fans and shareholders alike in Sunderland, the latest Premiership side to join the stock market. Played at 583p by Charthouse Tilney, the broker, the shares opened

at 652p, and touched a peak of 735p, before ending the session at 732p, a premium of 182p.

By the close of business a total of 215,545 shares had changed hands.

British Borneo strengthened, climbing 5p to 615p,

after announcing the purchase of blocks from Shell's Leo development in the Gulf of Mexico. James Capel, the company's broker, is talking the shares up to the 900p level.

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Maid, its recently acquired distilled distribution business. The company had been expected to make £29 million, compared with £27.1 million, but now £24 million is forecast.

LucasVarity was another loser, dipping a further 1p to 225p after the departure of John Grant, finance director, just four months in the job since the merger of Lucas Industries and Varity Corporations.

The sale of its German and Italian fine paper businesses lifted Bunzl 3p, to 229p.

Brokers saw the disposal as a positive move, with the group continuing to move out of low-margin operations and concentrating on the dearer end of the market.

A 24 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £372,000

lifted Deep Sea Leisure 8p to 172p.

□ GILT-EDGED: Prices ended the session on a firm note, having rallied from an early mark-down. Longer-dated issues were squeezed 1p higher during the last hour of the shortened trading session. In futures the March series of the long gilt rose three ticks to £110 in the lowest volume of the year with just 6,000 contracts completed. Treasury 8 per cent 2015 was £10325, while Treasury 8 per cent 2000 closed £16 higher at £10225.

□ NEW YORK: Wall Street's Christmas rally resumed with the Dow Jones industrial average rising 33.83 points to 6,522.85, putting it close to its record closing high of 6,547.79, set on November 25.



MICHAEL CLARK

Consumers seek clearer rules on gas competition

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE gas industry will come under increased pressure in the new year to improve the system which allows customers to switch suppliers as fresh problems emerge over billing in the South West.

Some bills for gas supplied since April have just been issued by Swegas. Meanwhile, British Gas has secured an opt-out from guidelines so it can accept customers back without insisting on fresh

terms to bind them to British Gas for a set period.

The Gas Consumers Council will press Ofgas, the regulator, for clearer rules on billing customers before they transfer in an effort to stem confusion as the next phase of competition looms.

Ofgas, under Clare Spottiswoode, the Director-General, said it was trying to iron out problems before the next rounds and was working with suppliers on final meter checks before transference.

Marketing is also likely to feature in the last major strategy session before competition is extended to Dorset and the former county of Avon after the controversy triggered by aggressive campaigning by a number of companies.

Swegas blames "the long lines of communication, now involved" for issuing bills to dozens of customers for gas supplies stretching back over eight months.

The customers were among the first tranche to switch suppliers. But amid a number of disputes about marketing tactics in which the Office of Fair Trading intervened, the customers said they had not realised they were switching contracts or did not want to do so and asked to return to British Gas. The few dozen remaining have not returned to British Gas.

However, at an extraordinary meeting on Monday to approve the LDS deal, Brian McGowan, Burnfield's chairman, will propose an adjournment while Fairey goes ahead with its bid.

Once the bid goes through Clive Snowden, Burnfield's managing director, is expected to depart with a

Burnfield caves in to Fairey Group bid

BY JASON NISSE

FAIREY GROUP has persuaded Burnfield, the rival engineering group, to cave in to its takeover bid after a last-minute offer increase to £57.7 million.

The all-share bid was increased on Tuesday morning after talks between the two sides led Fairey to increase the offer value first from £51 million to £55 million and then to the final £57.7 million.

Fairey is offering 25 of its shares for every 92 of Burnfield's, which valued each Burnfield share at 163.3p compared with a Tuesday close of 142p.

Because of a technicality to do with Burnfield's proposed £24 million purchase of LDS, the privately owned vibration measurement group, Burnfield's board is not able to recommend the Fairey offer.

However, at an extraordinary meeting on Monday to approve the LDS deal, Brian McGowan, Burnfield's chairman, will propose an adjournment while Fairey goes ahead with its bid.

Once the bid goes through Clive Snowden, Burnfield's managing director, is expected to depart with a

keen to smooth transference procedures before 1.5 million more households are able to shop around for their gas in February and March.

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LLOYDS TSB managed to keep most of its branches open on Christmas Eve afternoon despite a call from Bifu, the Banking Insurance and Finance Union, for its 20,000 members to strike in support of the traditional early closing (Gavin Lumsden writes).

However, widespread reports of long queues at cash dispensers outside Lloyds TSB branches undermined the bank's argument that its customers wanted a full banking service on Christmas Eve.

Lloyds TSB said that all but 74 of its 2,500 branches had stayed open on Tuesday afternoon. A Lloyds TSB spokesman said: "The vast majority of our staff have supported our move to be seen to support our customers. Our smaller business customers have been extremely happy that they were able to cash up in the afternoon."

However, Bifu insisted thousands of its members had gone home and that many of the branches had only been kept open

by skeleton teams, frequently bussed in from elsewhere. Noel Howell, a Bifu spokesman, admitted that many branches had stayed open but claimed customers had not gone in. "People just want the dash from the cash machines to get on with the shopping," he said.

Ed Sweeney, Bifu general secretary, said: "The banks may well want to follow supermarkets in their drive to extend opening hours, but they're also going to have to follow the supermarkets and take on extra staff, renegotiate working hours and seek volunteers for sensitive times like Christmas and New Year."

Lloyds keeps its doors open

BY SARA MCCONNELL

RECORD numbers of bank customers are expected to take advantage of all-hours telephone banking services over Christmas and new year, after the busiest run-up to the season in recent years.

Leading banks have collectively signed up millions of customers to telephone banking services over the past two years, after initial doubts about demand. Over the Christmas period customers have been checking depleted balances, moving money between accounts to ease Christmas cashflow problems and paying bills before new ones arrive on the new year.

This follows record spending in the high street on credit and debit cards in the days before Christmas. Barclays processed an unprecedented 2.9 million transactions on the Monday before Christmas, exceeding

even the 2.8 million the bank handled on Saturday.

At 3am on Christmas Eve Barclays dealt with seven card transactions a second as people took advantage of all-night supermarket opening.

Cash points dispensed £2,100 a second to Barclays customers alone on Monday, with Thurrock Lakeside, the Metro Centre at Gateshead, Camden Town and Sloane Street topping the withdrawal charts. South Kensington Underground was in the top ten for the first time.

First Direct, the telephone banking arm of the Midland and the longest-established telephone bank, is expecting to handle almost 9,000 calls today, nearly double the 4,567 calls it received last year. NatWest expects more than 9,700 calls from customers to its computerised Action Line on New Year's Day, after receiving more than 3,300 on Christmas Day. Today it expects about 10,000 calls, twice as many as last year.

For the first time this year the bank's Prime Line service, which offers customers access to their own banking adviser over the phone, was open over the Christmas period.

On New Year's Day, after receiving more than 3,300 on Christmas Day, today it expects about 10,000 calls, twice as many as last year.

For the first time this year the bank's Prime Line service, which offers customers access to their own banking adviser over the phone, was open over the Christmas period.

Many customers called to wish staff Merry Christmas. But banks denied that those who called their bank over Christmas were sad people who could find nothing better to do. First Direct said: "A lot of people are working over Christmas and ring the bank to sort their money out in a quiet moment."

Direct Line Financial Services, which sells financial products over the telephone, reported a rush of new custom in the run-up to Christmas. A total of 1,000 mortgages have been added to the company's books.

2,400 calls on New Year's Day and 1,500 today. Yesterday it had about 160.

Lloyds, which like Barclaycard limits its opening hours, is also expecting nearly double the number of calls it had last year.

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Bunzl sells two paper units to Dutch for £61m

Bunzl, the paper and plastics group, is selling its German and Italian fine paper businesses to KNP Bt, the Dutch group, for £61.6 million. Bunzl said the two businesses were achieving low margins while the group was focusing on higher-margin areas.

Completion of the disposal is conditional upon clearance under EU merger control regulations for which the parties will make an application shortly. The two businesses sold are Wilhelm Seiler of Germany and Bunzl Italia. The sale includes £4 million in external debts, which will be assumed by KNP Bt.

Merck sues

Merck & Co, the pharmaceutical company, is suing SmithKline Beecham to prevent it distributing a chickenpox vaccine in the US. Merck has sued four affiliates of SmithKline claiming exclusive rights to distribute the OKA strain varicella vaccine in the US and Canada. It has also filed for damages in the Delaware Chancery Court.

Merck says in the court papers that it received exclusive North American rights until 2005 to produce the drug. But Merck claims that SmithKline has told analysts that it has received approval from the Food and Drug Administration to distribute the drug in the US from next year.

Deals passed

Young Holdings said that the open offer to fund its acquisition of Madison Holdings was accepted by shareholders representing 50 per cent of the company. Shares not taken up have been placed with institutional investors. Optical Express said it received valid acceptances of its offer for Specialeyes representing 59.02 per cent of the company.

Fleets merge

Britain's two biggest passenger ferry companies, P & O and Stena, have signed their agreement to merge fleets on the Dover to Calais crossing to fight competition from the Channel Tunnel. The proposed £400 million merger is the subject of an MMC inquiry.

Railfreight sold

English Welsh and Scottish Railway has bought Railfreight Distribution, the international freight subsidiary of the British Railways Board. No price was disclosed. Railfreight, which operates services through the Channel Tunnel, made losses of £8.6 million in 1995-96.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sales
Australia \$	2.19	2.03
Austria Sch	19.27	17.77
Belgium Fr	55.95	51.18
Canada \$	2.203	2.223
Cyprus Cyp	0.819	0.764
Denmark Kr	10.51	9.71
Finland Mkr	8.34	7.69
France Fr	8.17	8.32
Germany Dm	2.25	2.24
Greece Dr	4.93	4.05
Hong Kong \$	13.59	12.59
Iceland Icl	1.20	1.00
Israel Shk	5.77	5.12
Italy Lira	2684	2509
Japan Yen	205.80	189.80
Malta Lm	0.443	0.388
Netherlands Gld	3.008	2.935
New Zealand \$	2.51	2.29
Norway Kr	11.37	10.57
Portugal Esc	272.50	254.00
S Africa Rd	8.	

Neural networking closes in on the consumer

Marianne Curphey on a computer system that aims to keep customers faithful to their insurance companies in a highly competitive market

How predictable are you? Your age, postcode, daily newspaper and last year's family holiday could be all an insurance company needs to draw up a picture of your secret life.

The majority of the big UK companies are testing complex computer systems to predict consumer behaviour and draw up lifestyle sketches. Known as neural networking, it is the buzz word in the insurance industry. Its current popularity is fuelled by competitive pressure and falling premium rates, and the need to keep existing customers to maximise profit margins.

Insurers make very little money from attracting new business and writing a new risk — the real profit is to be made from renewing existing policies of those customers considered a good risk. Most com-

panies average only a 70-80 per cent retention rate, and all fall victim to "churning" when rivals poach their clients. The promise of neural networking is that by feeding in many small pieces of information about each customer and then cross-referencing it many times, the computer will be able to predict which customer is likely to be the most fickle. They can then be targeted and encouraged to stay.

The computer software which analyses this data is a sophisticated version of the program that all insurers use to work out whether you are a good risk, based on your age, driving experience and no-claims bonus. The need to retain

customers has become pressing as the insurance industry has become more competitive with the arrival of Direct Line, the telephone insurer.

After Direct Line's huge success, 50 more direct insurers joined the industry, all competing for a finite amount of business. In response the composite insurers launched their own direct operations, and motor rates, particularly, were forced down. They have fallen 25-30 per cent over the past three years, and a report from Bacon & Woodrow, the actuary, predicts rates will rise only slightly next year. Motor insurance is the most competitive market, because widespread advertising by direct insurers has convinced con-

sumers of the need to shop around for the best rates.

Household insurance is a slightly different story: mortgage providers have in the past bundled bricks and mortar cover together with contents insurance, and penalised home owners who went elsewhere for insurance. Research has shown also that consumers feel a certain loyalty towards their bank or building society and are more likely to buy insurance there.

But Direct Line claims these rates are uncompetitive, and has calculated that consumers pay millions of pounds in unnecessarily high premiums. As the message gets through to consumers to shop

around, the ability to predict those who will switch becomes increasingly important. A spokeswoman for the Association of British Insurers said: "Insurers do not tend to discuss the results of neural networking with us because the data is not commercially sensitive."

One insurer prepared to talk about the value of neural networking is Royal & Sun Alliance. Mandy Bradley, who runs the company's personal systems operation, says one of the applications of neural networking is reducing the size of mailing lists for direct mailers.

"We look at the list of people who have been mailed by RSA, and use the system to weed out those from whom we have no hope of receiving a reply. This reduces the cost of the direct mail and helps us to target the best group."

Companions of honour

Paid Company, Radio 4 (FM), Noon.

Presenter Simon Mayo has a sensitive, capsular way of defining relationships. The last poignant flutter of Edwardian manners is how he sums up the link between the dowager Viscountess Scarsdale and Nancy Cammidge. Her ladyship, widow and nonagenarian, lives on her son's estate at Banbury, Oxfordshire. Nancy Cammidge is her housekeeper, cook, secretary and chauffeur ("Home, James, and don't spate the horses") is Lady Scarsdale's jocular way of telling her that yet another shopping trip is over. They have never had a row or even a cross word. Lady Scarsdale's motto is: "Life's too short to stuff a mushroom". Nancy Cammidge would, in any case, have been the one to do the stuffing.

A Wizard of Earthsea, Radio 4, 2.00pm.

Having made such a terrific job of adapting the first novel in Ursula Le Guin's Earthsea trilogy, I don't see how Bert Coules could escape being asked to dramatise the other two. If that should happen, Janet Whittaker won't have any option but to return to the director's seat. A Wizard of Earthsea is a radio spectacle on a grand scale, full of sound and fury signifying nothing — or, to put it another way, of a wizard played by Michael Maloney, who destroys an evil shadow that he has unwittingly summoned on a mysterious world. David Chilton's and Nick Russell-Paviers' music chills the blood. Judi Dench is the storyteller.

Flotations mean that dream team owes as much to Footsie as footie

Jason Nissé and
Alasdair Murray
see how clubs on
the market score
in financial terms

The gradual trend for football clubs to float has become a rush in recent months as they aim to cash in on football's new-found financial credibility and huge sums of TV money flooding into the game. The extra money that the clubs hope to find from the market could mean the difference between fulfilling dreams of European success and going to the wall.

The number of teams with either a full or AIM quote is sufficient now to field the City's very own dream team. Doubts remain about the quality of all the clubs joining the market and some of the team's positions need strengthening. Below *The Times* presents football's financial first XI.

1: Goalkeeper — Sunderland Bob Murray, the dour Wearside chairman, has fended off doubt about Sunderland's financial future should it be relegated from the Premiership. He has also shown a financial clean sheet about the building of the new stadium, where everything is sponsored bar the soap in the players' showers. Sunderland is susceptible to a low shot about its controversial accounting practices, where player purchases are not depreciated until a year after the deal. And despite Murray's claims about a million Sunderland fans, with Newcastle United just six miles away, Sunderland clearly does not command its area.

2: Right back — Loftus Road This company is better at rugby — Wasps having a real chance of honours this season — than football. The lacklustre form of QPR on the field has been reflected in the share price, and while other football stocks have been roaring away, Loftus Road has been in neutral. This might change as QPR strikes towards promotion to the Premiership. Finding a permanent chief executive might also help and, with a strong property element, this is a good defensive share.

3: Left back — Celtic Celtic has proved a consistent and reliable financial performer and is immensely popular with the fans — the club has



Karen Brady will become the youngest female managing director of a quoted company when Birmingham City floats

10,000 supporter shareholders, the most for any quoted club. Fergus McCann, a former marketing man for Pretty Polly, has also added some City class by attracting Patrick Sheeran, the former BAT chief, and Brian Quinn, ex-Bank of England, to the boardroom. Mr McCann believes Celtic is one of only four clubs in the country with its back to the wall is trying to return the club to its former glory. It has a questionable disciplinary record — former directors include Reg Bresley, of Tintagur Jute, and Stephen Hincliffe, of Padias, and has spent too long in the lower divisions. There is a big property play at hand and juicy incentives to return to the top flight. It may never be a star side, but if it was 0-0 in the 89th minute the Blades would be the team to put your money on.

4: Midfield — Southampton A surprise arrival on the quoted scene, the club has cleverly strung together a revenue takeover — the financial equivalent of a Le Tissier through ball — that should take them on the market early next month. New captain, Rupert Lowe, admires to be an amateur sportsman (and a former West Ham fan to boot) but is a professional City man. The absence of any nearby Premiership rivals should give

the club room to develop. The £10 million valuation placed on the club — £5 million less than paid for Alan Shearer alone — could prove to be a steal.

5: Centre half — Sheffield Utd A strong, hard-tackling financial team which is best with its back to the wall is trying to return the club to its former glory. The Old Trafford club is the playmaker of football finance. Everyone else in the business is looking for its moves, be it the through ball to pay-per-view, the cross-field pass on sponsorship or the defensive tackle to use highly valued shares to finance property deals. United is the world-class performer and valued accordingly. A market capitalisation of £400 million is justified for one of the few truly global brands being properly exploited by a strong management team under Martin Edwards. But does that mean everyone else should have similar price tags?

6: Centre half — Tottenham Hotspur

Once flashy and controversial, Spurs has become, under Alan Sugar, the Amstrad boss, a boringly dependable company whose solid results, conservative financing and workman-

like attitude are refreshing in the frosty world of football finance. But Sugar's Spurs are hardly going to set the world on fire. The team may know how to defend a corner, and avoid giving away late goals, but can they win the silverware?

7: Midfield general — Manchester United

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8: Striker — Newcastle United

Rescue from the obscurity of the lower divisions has not proved cheap. Birmingham has acquired something of a prima donna reputation with David Sullivan, the chairman who has put £7 million into the club, repeatedly threatening to sell out faced with negative press criticism or opposition from the city council. Next

Halton's team is out to prove it is bigger than its home town by forcing the council to dig up a public park so the "Toon" can build a new 55,000-seat stadium. The club's potential has long been hidden by bad management but it now shows signs of being a true competitor to Manchester United. Many of its moves appear aggressive, and there is a worry that, despite spending £60 million on players, it has nothing in the trophy cabinet. A new year float will show a valuation as astronomical as the £15 million paid for Alan Shearer. And like Shearer's price tag, it will take a great deal of living up to.

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10: Winger — Caspian

Leeds United was a bargain basement purchase — £16 million for a club with average

gates of 30,000 from Sunderland, with a third less attendance, is valued at more than £60 million. Although Chris Akers, of Caspian, presents himself as a visionary in the sports media world, no one appears to be getting on the end of his ambitious passes. Leeds rugby league club chose a rival owner, plans to build an indoor arena next door to Elland Road have yet to bear fruit and the signing of George Graham as manager brought the sort of football to encourage fans to go Christmas shopping. Plans to buy an ice hockey team or tempt Bradford Bulls, the rugby superleague side, into the fold are also doubtful. The team must score soon or face a spell in the reserves.

11: Winger — Chelsea Village

Chelsea's owner is a flashy performer whose shares have doubled in value since floating on AIM this year. This is despite the death of Matthew Harding, who as deputy chairman brought credibility, and an opaque shareholding structure. Not only has the identity of Rysiffe, the largest shareholder, never been revealed, but there is a new investor whose identity is not even known to Chelsea's company secretary. The company is valued at ten times its 1995-96 turnover despite reporting a loss of £2.95 million. Great hopes are pinned on the redevelopment of the Stamford Bridge stadium, but would you stay in a hotel there? This is the classic flatter-to-deceive club.

On the bender:

West Ham is talking float. Everton and Aston Villa are thinking float, and Arsenal, everyone's favourite to join the market, has seen its share price rise from £800 to £4,050 this year — so does it need a float? West Brom is slipping, hardly noticed, on to Aim to join the minnows' minnow, Preston North End, while shares in Millwall — nice stadium, shame about the club — show what can happen if a quoted team is relegated and cannot pull itself around — even with the skills of advertising guru Peter Mead behind the club.

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RADIO 1

10.00am Simon Mayo, includes special guest 11.00am George Michael in Concert. Simon Mayo presents an exclusive performance recorded earlier this year. 1.00pm Cherie Jordan 3.00pm Dave Pearce 4.00pm Evening Session. 9.00pm Saturday 10.00pm Shirley Manson. 10.30pm The Last of the Summer Wine 11.00pm The Queen's Commonwealth Games 12.15pm Britain Today 12.30pm Assignment 2.05pm Outlook 2.25pm Multitrack 3.05pm Sport 3.15pm From Our Own Correspondent 3.30pm National UK 4.15pm World Today 4.30pm BBC English 4.45pm Britain Today 5.30pm Match of the Day 6.00pm The Big Breakfast 6.30pm Clive Warren with the Early Breakfast Show

RADIO 2

4.00pm Alex Lester 8.00pm Wake up to Wagner, 10.00pm Ken Bruce 1.00pm Christmas Comedy Classics 1.30pm Sounds Like Disney 3.00pm Steve Wright 5.00pm Christmas on Broadway 7.00pm My Mam and Me 8.00pm Shirley Manson 8.30pm Never Walk Alone (S4) 11.30pm Sport on Five 6.30pm The Thursday Match, Sheffield Wednesday v Aston, Manchester City v Port Vale and Aberdeen v Celtic 10.05pm Off Piste 11.05pm Weather Reports 11.30pm The Last of the Summer Wine 12.00pm The Rut 12.30pm After Hours 1.00pm Call With Hanne 2.05pm All Night, with Hinch Sharpe

RADIO 3

5.00am Morning Reports, includes 5.45am Wake Up to Money 6.05am Christmas Quiz 7.00am The Breakfast Programme 8.00am The Saturday Show 8.30am Never Walk Alone (S4) 11.30pm Sport on Five 6.30pm The Thursday Match, Sheffield Wednesday v Aston, Manchester City v Port Vale and Aberdeen v Celtic 10.05pm Off Piste 11.05pm Weather Reports 11.30pm The Last of the Summer Wine 12.00pm The Rut 12.30pm After Hours 1.00pm Call With Hanne 2.05pm All Night, with Hinch Sharpe

RADIO 4

6.00am On Air, includes Schumann: Symphony No 1 in B flat (Spring); Dargomilov: The Queen of Spades (Mousses); Lortzing: Josephine (Winterreise); Schumann: Overture (Manfred); Haydn: Mass in G minor; Massi: Sancti Nicola; 9.00am Morning Concert: Borodin: Overture (Zhuravli); Mendelssohn: Six Songs without Words; Op 85 (K67); Nielsen: (Violin Concerto)

10.00am Musical Encounters, With Shirley Miller, featuring Rachmaninoff: Introduction and Allegro; Stamitz: Clarinet Concerto in B flat; Grieg: How Fair Thou Art, Op 74 No 1; Bach, arr North (Suite G, BWV100); Bernstein: (Piano Concerto)

RADIO 5 LIVE

5.00am Morning Reports, includes 5.45am Wake Up to Money 6.05am Christmas Quiz 7.00am The Breakfast Programme 8.00am The Saturday Show 8.30am Never Walk Alone (S4) 11.30pm Sport on Five 6.30pm The Thursday Match, Sheffield Wednesday v Aston, Manchester City v Port Vale and Aberdeen v Celtic 10.05pm Off Piste 11.05pm Weather Reports 11.30pm The Last of the Summer Wine 12.00pm The Rut 12.30pm After Hours 1.00pm Call With Hanne 2.05pm All Night, with Hinch Sharpe

VIRGIN RADIO

6.00am Jenny Clark 10.00am Graham Dene 2.00pm Lynn Parsons 4.00pm Paul Coyle (FM) / Robin Banks (AM) 10.00pm Howard Pearce 2.00pm John Hopper Collins

RADIO 3

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RADIO 4

5.00am Shipping (LW) 6.00 News 6.15 Farming 6.25 Prayer 6.30 Living World 7.00 Today 9.00 News (FM) 9.00 Test Match Special (LW): 2.00pm Cricket 10.00pm Live commentary 10.30pm Brush with Biscott (FM). A report on the issues surrounding fox hunting, as the Biscott Hunt agrees to be

9.45 Spilt's Flies, Knew and Hiddele Elephants (FM), by Spike Milligan

10.00 The Amateur Myth (FM). Simon Armitage investigates the world of Emily Dickinson (F)

10.00 Daily Service (LW) 10.15 On This Day (LW)

10.30 Derek Cooper's Necessary Pleasures (FM). The best way to eat a beet

10.30 Test Match Special (LW): 11.00 Farm and Country 11.30 The Old Curiosity Shop, by Charles Dickens (26)

12.00 Paul Company: The Lady's Companion. See Choice

12.25 Weather Watch 12.35 Weather with Nick Clarke

1.07 Test Match Special (LW) 1.40 The Archers (FM) 1.55 Shipping

2.00 A Wizard of Earthsea: See Choice

4.00 News: The Waltons: A Son of Mine 5.00 Barlow with the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia to meet the real Wild Bill (r)

4.45 Short Story: Rumpole and the Widow Twankey, by John Mortimer

5.00 and 5.55 Shipping 5.55 Weather

6.00 Star O'Clock News

6.15 London Tonight, with Raymond Sutcliffe, the former Ambassador to London, reflects on the importance of national identity

6.30 The New York Stand-Up Comedy



DREAM TEAM 42

Football's financial first XI

BUSINESS

THURSDAY DECEMBER 26 1996

GAS BILLS 41

Ofgas raises pressure on suppliers



BUSINESS EDITOR LINDSAY COOK

Investors must act fast to qualify for society bonuses

BY CAROLINE MERRELL AND ANNE ASHWORTH

TENS of thousands of building society account holders are in danger of losing bonuses averaging £1,000 if they do not act soon. Those who have allowed their accounts to fall below the all-important £100 qualifying level and do not top up their accounts by December 31 will lose out.

Some £16 billion is to be distributed by the societies becoming banks and being taken over by banks in the

wave of demutualisation sweeping through the industry. But only borrowers and investors who meet certain criteria can receive payouts. A balance of £100 gives the right to vote in the poll changing the society's status.

As many as 100,000 Alliance & Leicester investors have already lost their bonuses. The society twice attempted to contact savers with small accounts to inform them that they were entitled to 250 free shares, provided that they topped up their

accounts by October 14. They missed the deadline.

The other societies poised to float or be taken over next year — Halifax, Woolwich, Bristol & West and Northern Rock — have yet to estimate how many of their investors will be left empty-handed, either through forgetfulness or ignorance. But if even 0.5 per cent of the 13.2 million saving members at the four societies fail to replenish their accounts by New Year's Eve, then some 66,000 people will kiss good-

bye to average payouts of £1,000, a loss of some £66 million.

The Bristol & West reports that its investors have already been busy ensuring their windfalls. In the past few weeks, some 17,000 have increased their balances to £100 following reminder letters sent in November.

For those forced into making a late dash to replenish their accounts, the societies will be open as normal between Christmas and new year. Cheques paid into ac-

counts will not need to be cleared to count towards qualifying for a payout, but the societies have given warning that any cheques which subsequently bounce will exclude people from the bonanza.

In order to qualify for the shares, borrowing and saving members of these societies must have also had £100 in their accounts on certain other dates. For instance, the nine million members of the Halifax were first told of the proposals for the flotation of their society on

November 25, 1994. In order to qualify for the basic distribution of shares members must have had £100 in their accounts on this date as well as having £100 in their accounts at the end of this year.

The Halifax is also offering a variable share distribution based on the amount they have in the account. These extra shares will be based on the lower of two balances between November 25, 1994 and the date of the special general meeting, which is expected to be in February.

RUSSELL SACH

All win in latest soccer listing

BY JASON NISSE

SUNDERLAND guaranteed a Merry Christmas for the burgeoning quoted football club sector when its shares soared to a 25 per cent premium in their flotation price in just a few hours of trading, giving the Wearside club a market value of £60 million.

This is more than four times the income predicted for Sunderland this season and comes against a background of market fears that the club could be relegated from the Premiership after its 5-0 drubbing by Manchester United.

Market-makers snapped up any Sunderland shares in the four hours of Christmas Eve trading, expecting a flurry of serious orders when the market reopens tomorrow. The shares closed at 732½p, compared with a flotation price of 585p.

The trading gave a £23.6 million valuation of the stake in Sunderland held by Bob Murray, its chairman. However, the widest smile will be on the face of Sir John Hall, chairman of Sunderland's neighbours Newcastle United. The Tyneside club plans to publish the details of its stock market flotation in the middle of January, and it is now expected that the flotation value will be nearer £200 million than the £150 million previously expected.

Should the Newcastle float go well, the City expects some of the Premiership's big clubs to float, including Everton, Aston Villa and Arsenal.

Speculation about Arsenal has pushed its shares, which are traded on the unregulated Olex market, up by more than a third in the past three weeks. In January these shares stood at just £800. On Tuesday they were priced at £4,050, valuing the club at £227 million.

Southampton will be the next club to come to market after the £10 million reverse takeover of Secure Retirement. It has rejected offers from Sir David Frost, the TV presenter, and Gavin Davies, the Labour-leaning economist, to become investors.

Nomura International, the securities firm, has started a Footie Index, which priced a basket of shares, including Manchester United, Chelsea, Villa and West Ham United, at 100 on December 11. It closed on Tuesday at 119.3.

Football finance XL, page 42

Further Rec bid likely to follow Northern defeat

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY AND ERIC REGULY

NORTHERN ELECTRIC has lost its independence by a narrow margin and at least one more takeover in the electricity sector is thought to be in the pipeline.

The seizure of Northern by CE Electric of America leaves just two independent regional electricity companies — Southern and Yorkshire — without bids. Southern has a market value of about £2 billion and a takeover battle could raise the price to £2.5 billion or more. Yorkshire's market value is about £1.3 billion.

The identity of the potential bidder for Southern or Yorkshire is not known, though American utilities are thought to be on the prowl.

The takeover of Northern leaves more than a quarter of the industry in American hands. Seaboard, Midlands

Electricity and London Electricity are controlled by US groups, and East Midlands Electricity recently received a bid from Dominion Resources of Virginia.

Northern faces a boardroom shake-up after CE seized control by a narrow margin. The US group mounted a £782 million bid in one of the fiercest and most controversial battles in recent takeover history. It took hold of the company on Christmas Eve with acceptances of 50.3 per cent.

The bid hung in the balance until the last minute because of the intervention of the Prudential, Northern's biggest shareholder. It made a last-ditch attempt to secure support for the utility's rejection of the 650p — CE Electric's offer price. The shares, which amount to 0.9 per cent of the company, were sold by investors who had previously accepted CE Electric's offer.

The Northern boardroom casualties are likely to include David Morris, chairman, and Tony Hadfield, chief executive. Northern's directors could net up to £25 million in share-option profits and compensation packages if they are replaced. Northern said after it had lost control that it thought it had won the argument about value for the company, but it had been up to the market to decide.

The crucial twist came when the Takeover Panel extended the bid period after controversy over a discretionary payment of £250,000 made to BZW, Northern's financial advisers.

The panel made the unusual move to extend the deadline because the discretionary fee had not been disclosed when the panel allowed BZW and Schroders, the merchant bank and advisers to Northern, to buy the utility's shares in the market.

The purchase of more than 2 per cent of the shares was crucial to Northern's defence. The payment, which came on top of a £1.5 million flat fee for BZW, was frozen by the panel.

Northern had scraped past the post to retain its independence by 1pm last Friday — the original bid deadline — when CE Electric had gained acceptances for only 49.77 per cent of the shares.

On the last morning of the bid it repeated its offer to CE Electric of talks at a "sensible price". A spokesman said: "We didn't want to give the impression that we just wanted to stay in our turret in Newcastle."

By the weekend, CE Electric said that late acceptances had pushed it to victory with 50.13 per cent.

Trade deficit improves despite strong pound

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

THE trade deficit with the rest of the world declined by more than expected in October, suggesting that export performance remains strong despite the soaring pound.

The total deficit fell to £454 million, compared with £1.05 billion in September, according to the Office for National Statistics. But the deficit with non-EU countries in November rose to £639 million from £418 million in October.

Economists expect that in the medium term the rising pound will hit British export competitiveness and the deficit will begin to widen again.

Rank buys Canadian Hard Rock interests

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

THE Rank Group completed the reunitification of its Hard Rock Cafe empire this week when it paid \$61 million for the chain's Canadian operations and licensing rights.

The Canadian branch of the famous rock-themed restaurant chain includes three owned cafes and eight franchises. The operations had been owned by the Bitoval family, who control substantial catering interests.

Rank said that it would renovate and convert the sites to conform to the look and feel of the original Hard Rock Cafe opened in London in 1971. Rank now owns 75 Hard Rock Cafes, having paid \$410 million this year for the US operations formerly owned by Peter Morton, one of the chain's founders. The company also bought back the rights to develop the chain in South Africa.

ACROSS

- 1 Misuse (3-5)
- 5 Look for (4)
- 8 Asian plant, its leaves, nuts chewed (5)
- 9 Competitor in running, throwing (7)
- 11 Carton: fight (3)
- 12 Occurring eight-yearly (9)
- 13 Dedicate (6)
- 15 Sweet (tones) (6)
- 18 Heavy and drooping (9)
- 19 Rowers' helmsman (3)
- 20 Able to be read (7)
- 21 Time-waster (5)
- 22 Anorak-wearing bore (4)
- 23 Octopus arm (8)

DOWN

- 1 Drank (7)
- 2 Tree-fluid for rubber (5)
- 3 Empirical guide (H.2.5)
- 4 Is in expectation of (6)
- 6 Poetically mournful (7)
- 7 The curlew tolled it of parting day (Gray) (5)
- 10 Announcement of decorations (7,4)
- 14 Sour condiment (7)
- 16 Not subject to levy (3-4)
- 17 Spinach-eating sailor (6)
- 18 Electricity cable support (5)
- 19 Severe stomach cramp (5)

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Name/Address _____

SOLUTION TO NO 973

ACROSS: 1 Earl, 3 Codicil, 8 Contour, 9 Later, 10 Refit, 11 Spatula, 13 No comment, 17 Laetis, 19 Heron, 20 Avast, 22 Romance, 23 Hellene, 24 Welt.

DOWN: 1 Encore, 2 Ring-fence, 3 Christmas tree, 4 Delta, 5 Cat, 6 Latist, 7 Tactic, 12 Utterance, 14 Exultume, 15 Beach, 16 Intent, 18 Title, 21 All.

lapse of Barings. The committee noted "with concern" that the SFA had failed to detect a lack of internal controls and management weaknesses during an inspection visit in January 1995, shortly before Barings collapsed.

Surprisingly few cases in which members are fined or punished are uncovered by the SFA's own surveillance. The SFA concedes that a "significant element" of cases are detected by firms internally, but points out that members face punitive action if they attempt to conceal the details.

Failings were highlighted in the recent Treasury Select Committee report on the col-

lapse of Barings. The committee noted "with concern" that the SFA had failed to detect a lack of internal controls and management weaknesses during an inspection visit in January 1995, shortly before Barings collapsed.

Computer problems at Fidelity Brokerage were picked up after complaints by investors. Subsequent SFA action threatened to damage sales at Fidelity Investments, a separate strand of the fund management group. The SFA was at pains to stress that Fidelity Investments was not involved.

The SFA concedes weaknesses, but says the existing system is fair. A spokesman said: "If there has been a serious lack of control in a firm, it is right and proper that the firm's failings should be

recognised." Fines worth more than £1 million have been imposed by the SFA in the past 12 months. It operates at a cost of £23 million a year, funded largely through a levy on members.

Many firms privately voice their anger at what is seen as a heavy-handed approach. One broker said: "We took all our problems to the SFA and said 'We brought it to you, give us the recognition.' They did the complete opposite."

He added: "Their job is to look after us, and hammer us if we do wrong. But you begin to wonder what agenda they're serving. Are they being gratuitously tough just to bolster their own reputation?"

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